BROWNING

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PAULINE — PARACELSUS

PIPPA PASSES

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

PAULINE

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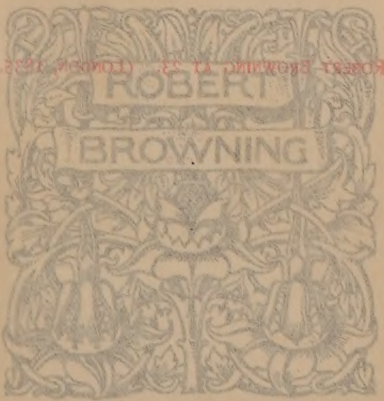
KING VICTOR AND
KING CHARLES



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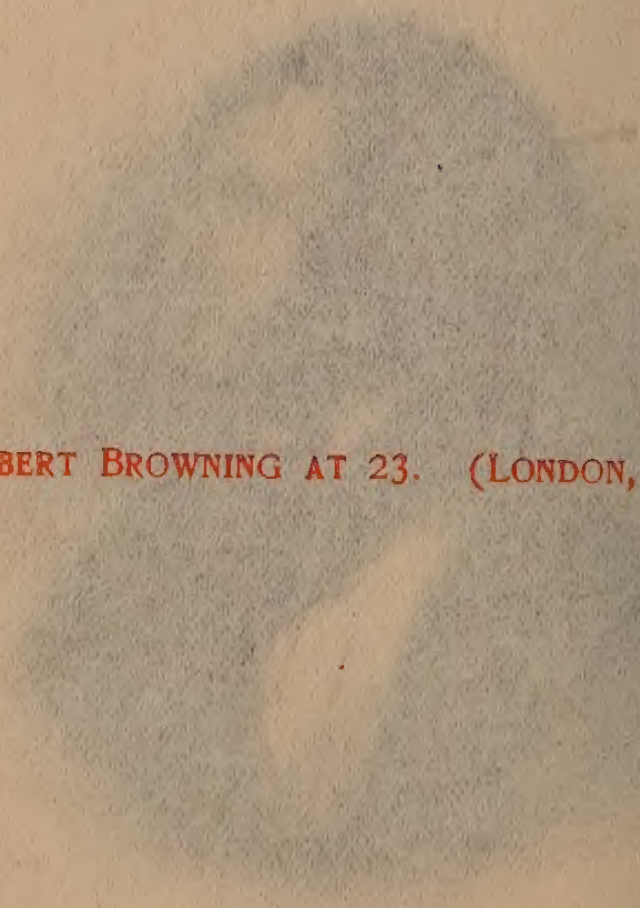

ROBERT BROWNING AT 23. (LONDON, 1835.)

PAULINE

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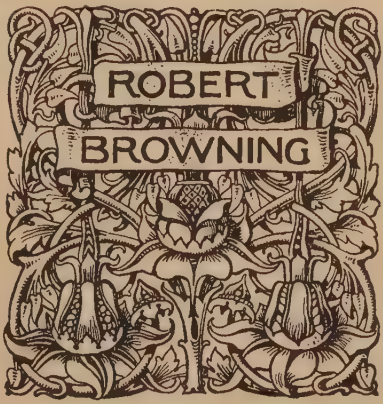

THOMAS·Y·CROWELL·
COMPANY·NEW~YORK

PAULINE—PARACELSUS
PIPPA PASSES
KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

From the Author's Revised Text

Edited with Introductions and Notes by

CHARLOTTE PORTER AND HELEN A. CLARKE

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EDITORS' PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION.

Opportunity has been taken in this edition to make a few scattered corrections and additions; but as before, so now, the Editors have considered it their duty to follow and to keep intact Browning's own latest revised text.

Believing it is of primary importance in any edition of an author that his reader be able to rely upon the text being exactly as his last touch left it, they have not adopted such readings and punctuation as have been inserted without authority in other American editions.

For instance, they advisedly do not adopt the re-reading of "The Ring and the Book," Book x., line 251, — "All was error, lore," which is an entirely gratuitous alteration of Browning's "All was error, lord," — the supposed speaker here addressing the Pope. Nor do they adopt the more plausible re-pointing of Book vi., line 134, — "Better late than never, law!" in lieu of Browning's — "Better late than never, law You understand of a sudden," etc., which requires only a sympathetic construal of the context as a whole to see is perfectly clear, as it stands, and peculiarly suitable, too, in form of expression to Caponsacchi's unstopped grief-wrought rhetoric, as he pushes home to the court once so complacent, now so perturbed, the legal, ay, and the priestly pro-

priety of his endeavor to save Pompilia from her murderer.

Attempts to re-punctuate Browning, in "Sordello" in particular, although sometimes tempting, are perilous. For instance, the repointing, in the Cambridge edition, of the crucial passage in Book ii., lines 655–689, instead of lessening, adds difficulty and obscures the only way out of that many-linked passage, the way, namely, provided by Browning's last punctuation, adhered to in this edition.

A few manifest misprints in Browning's text, however, hitherto left undisturbed by anybody, the Editors have considered might be amended without presumption. For example, in "Donald" they have deleted the *r* in line 234, so as to make the passage read, — "Within gate [instead of *grate*] Though teeth kept tongue, My whole soul growled 'Rightly rewarded, — Ingrate!'" since the sense, the rhyme, the adaptation from Homer — all combines to reveal not only the verbal slip, but the poet's intention. So, again, in "Strafford," act i., scene i., line 27, — the reading of all other editions, — "Now, by Heaven, *Then* may be cool who can," etc., has been amended to "They may be cool who can," etc., — the poet's intention being unmistakable, the first edition, moreover, confirming this.

Such justifiable emendations are necessarily few. They do not invalidate the general working rule of this edition — *i.e.*, to follow the poet's text and not to seek occasions to amend it, but rather to seek to avoid such occasions by a sympathetic comprehension of the poet's meaning and habits of writing.

BOSTON, October 27, 1900.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

" A peep through my window, if folk prefer ;
But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine."
'*House.*'

When some depreciator of the familiar declared that "Only in Italy is there any romance left," Browning replied, "Ah! well, I should like to include poor old Camberwell;" and "poor old Camberwell," where Robert Browning was born, May 7, 1812, offered no meagre nurture for the fancy of a child gifted with the ardor that greatens and glorifies the real.

Nature still garlanded this suburban part of London with bowery spaces breathing peace. The view of the region from Herne Hill over softly wreathing distances of domestic wood "was, before railroads came, entirely lovely," Ruskin says. He writes of "the tops of twenty square miles of politely inhabited groves," of bloom of lilac and laburnum and of almond-blossoms, intermingling suggestions of the wealth of fruit-trees in enclosed gardens, and companioning all this with the furze, birch, oak, and bramble of the Norwood hills, and the open fields of Dulwich "animate with cow and buttercup."

Nature was ready to beckon the young poet to dreams and solitude, and, too close to need to vie with

her, the great city was at hand to make her power intimately felt. From a height crowned by three large elms, Browning, as a lad, used to enjoy the picturesqueness of his "poor old Camberwell." Its heart of romance was centred for him in the sight of the vast city lying to the westward. His memory singled out one such visit as peculiarly significant, the first one on which he beheld teeming London by night, and heard the vague confusion of her collective voice beneath the silence of the stars.

Within the home into which he was born, equally well-poised conditions befriended him, fostering the development of his emotional and intellectual nature. His mother was once described by Carlyle as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman." Browning himself used to say of her "with tremulous emotion," according to his friend, Mrs. Orr, "she was a divine woman." Her gentle, deeply religious nature evidently derived its evangelical tendency from her mother, also Scotch; while from her father, William Wiedemann, ship-owner, a Hamburg German, settled in Dundee, who was an accomplished draughtsman and musician, she seems to have derived the liking and facility for music which was one of the characteristic bents of the poet. To this Scotch-German descent on his mother's side the metaphysical quality of his mind is accountable, concerning which Harriet Martineau is recorded as having said to him, "You have no need to study German thought, your mind is German enough already." The peculiarly tender affection his mother called out in him seems to have been at once proof and enhancement of the mystical, emotional, and impressible side of his disposition; and these traits were founded on an organic inheritance from her

of "what he called a nervousness of nature," which his father could not have bequeathed to him.

Exuberant vitality, insatiable intellectual curiosity and capacity, the characteristics of Robert Browning the elder, were the heritage of his son, but raised in him to a more effective power, through their transmutation, perhaps, as Mrs. Orr suggests, in the more sensitive physique and temperament inherited from his mother. Of his father, Browning wrote that his "Powers, natural and acquired, would easily have made him a notable man, had he known what vanity or ambition or the love of money or social influence meant." He had refused to stay on his mother's sugar plantation at St. Kitt's in the West Indies, losing the fortune to be achieved there, because of his detestation of slavery, and the office he filled in the Bank of England was never close enough to his liking to induce him to rise in it so far as his father had risen; but it enabled him to indulge his tastes for many books and a few pictures and to secure for his son, as that son said shortly before his death, "all the ease and comfort that a literary man needs to do good work."

One of the poet's own early recollections gives a picture that epitomizes the joint influence of his happy parentage. It depicts the child "sitting on his father's knees in the library, listening with enthralled attention to the tale of Troy, with marvellous illustrations among the glowing coals in the fireplace; with, below all, the vaguely heard accompaniment — from the neighboring room where Mrs. Browning sat 'in her chief happiness, her hour of darkness and solitude and music' — of a wild Gaelic lament."

His father's brain was itself a library, stored with literary antiquities, which, his son used to say, made

him seem to have known Paracelsus, Faustus, and even Talmudic personages personally, and his heart was so young and buoyant that his lore, instead of isolating him from his boy and girl, made him their most entertaining companion.

It is not surprising that under such circumstances the ordinary schooling was too puerile for young Robert's wide-awake wits. He was so energetic in mind and body that he was sent to a day-school near by for peace' sake at an early age, and sent back again, for peace' sake, too, because his proficiency made the mammas complain that Mrs. —— was neglecting her other pupils for the sake of bringing on Master Browning. Home teaching followed. Also home amusement, which included the keeping of a variety of pets, — owls, monkeys, magpies, hedgehogs, an eagle, a toad, and two snakes. If any further proof is needed of the hospitable warmth of his youthful heart, an entry in his diary at the age of seven or eight may serve — "married two wives this morning." This referred, of course, to an imaginary appropriation of two girls he had just seen in church.

Later he entered the school of the Misses Ready and passed thence to their brother's school, staying there till he was fourteen; but his contempt for the petty and formal learning which is the best accorded many children, was marked, and perfectly natural to a boy who delighted to plunge in the deeper knowledge his father's book-crammed house opened generously to him.

In the list, given by Mrs. Orr, of books early attractive to him, were a seventeenth edition of Quarles's "Emblems;" first editions of "Robinson Crusoe" and Milton; the original pamphlet, "Killing no Mur-

der" (1559), which Carlyle borrowed for his "Cromwell;" an early edition of the "Bees" by the Bernard Mandeville with whom he was destined later to hold a "Parleying" of his own; rare old Bibles; Voltaire; a wide range of English poetry; the Greek and Elizabethan dramatists.

His father's profound love of poetry was essentially classic, and his marked aptitude in rhyming followed the models of Pope, but Browning's early poet was Byron, and all his sympathies were warmly romantic. His verse-making, which began before he could write, resulted at twelve in a volume of short poems, presumably Byronic, which he gracefully entitled "Incondita."

He wanted, in vain, to find a publisher for this, and soon afterwards destroyed it, but not before his mother had shown it to Miss Flower, and she to her sister, Sarah Flower, and to Mr. Fox, and the budding poet had thus gained the attention of three genuine friends.

Shortly after this, the Byronic star which had shed its somewhat lurid influence over the first ebullitions of his genius, was forever banished by the appearance of a new star within his field of vision. Incredible as it may seem to the present generation, he had never heard of Shelley, and if it had not been for a happy chance, an important influence in the early shaping of his poetic faculties might have been postponed until too late to furnish its quickening impulse.

One day in passing a book-stall, he happened to see advertised in a box of second-hand wares a little book, "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poems:" very scarce. Though the little second-hand volume was only a miserable pirated edition, by its means such entrancing glimpses of an unsuspected world were revealed to the boy that he longed to possess more of Shelley. His

mother, accordingly, sallied forth in search of Shelley's poems, which, after many tribulations, she at length found at C. and J. Ollier's of Vere Street. She brought away not only nearly all of Shelley in first editions (the "Cenci" excepted), but three volumes by Keats, as she was assured he would interest anybody who liked Shelley. Browning himself used to recall how, at the end of this eventful day, two nightingales, one in the laburnum at the end of his father's garden, and one in a copper beech in the next garden, sang in emulation of the poets whose music had laid its subtile spell upon him. While Keats was duly appreciated, it was Shelley who appealed most to Browning, and although it was some years before any poetic manifestation of Shelley's influence was to work itself out, he, with youthful ardor, at once adopted the crude attitude taken by Shelley in his immature work "Queen Mab," became a professing atheist, and even went so far as to practise vegetarianism, of which, however, he was soon cured because of its unpleasant effect on his eyesight. Of his atheism Mrs. Orr says: "His mind was not so constituted that such doubt fastened itself upon it; nor did he ever in after life speak of this period of negation except as an access of boyish folly, with which his mature self could have no concern. The return to religious belief did not shake his faith in his new prophet. It only made him willing to admit that he had misread him. This period of Browning's life remained, nevertheless, one of rebellion and unrest, to which many circumstances may have contributed besides the influence of one mind."

With the exception of the poetic awakening just recorded, Browning's youthful life is uneventful.

By his father's decision his education was con-

tinued at home with instruction in dancing, riding, boxing, fencing; in French with a tutor for two years; and in music with John Relfe for theory, and a Mr. Abel, pupil of Moscheles, for execution, doubtless supplemented with continuous browsing among the rare books in his father's library. At eighteen he attended a Greek class at the London University for a term or two and with this his formal education ceased. It was while at the university that his final choice of poetry as his future profession was made. That he had a bent in other artistic directions as well as that of poetry is witnessed by his own confession written on the fly-leaf of a first edition of "Pauline," now treasured in the South Kensington Museum. "'Pauline,' written in pursuance of a foolish plan I forget, or have no wish to remember; involving the assumption of several distinct characters: the world was never to guess that such an opera, such a comedy, such a speech proceeded from the same notable person."

Some idea had been entertained of the possibility of Robert's qualifying himself for the bar, but Mr. Browning was entirely too much in sympathy with his son's interests to put any obstacles in the way of his choice, and did everything in his power to help him in establishing himself in his poetical career. When the decision was made, Browning's first step was to read and digest the whole of Johnson's Dictionary.

During these years of preparation his consciousness of his own latent powers, together with youthful immaturity, made him, from all accounts, a somewhat obstreperous personage. Mrs. Orr says that his mother was much distressed at his impatience and aggressiveness. "He set the judgments of those about him at defiance, and gratuitously proclaimed himself every-

thing that he was and some things that he was not.' It is probable, as his sister suggests, that the life of Camberwell, in spite of the dear home to which he wa much attached, and a small coterie of congenial friends, including his cousins, the Silverthornes, and Alfred Domett, did not afford sufficient scope for the expansion of his eager intelligence.

In 1833 appeared the first flowering of his genius in "Pauline," for the publication of which his aunt, Mrs. Silverthorne, furnished the money. It was printed with no name affixed, by Saunders and Otley.

The influence of Shelley breathes through this poem; not only is it immanent in the music of the verse, but in its general atmosphere, while one of its finest climaxes is the apostrophe to Shelley beginning, "Sun-treader, life and light be thine forever!" These influences, however, are commingled with elements of striking originality, indicating, in spite of some crudities of construction, that here was a new force in the poetic world. Not many recognized it at the time. Among those who did was his former friend, Mr. Fox, then editor of the *Monthly Repository*, who gave "Pauline" a sympathetic review in his magazine. Later, another article praising it was printed in the same magazine. This and one or two other inadequate notices ended its early literary history, and thus was unassumingly planted the first seed of one of the most splendid poetical growths the world has seen. How completely "Pauline" was forgotten is shown by the anecdote told of Rossetti's coming across it in the British Museum twenty years later, and guessing from internal evidence that it was by the author of "Paracelsus." Delighted with it, he transcribed it. If he had not, it might have remained buried there to

this day, for Browning was very loath to acknowledge this early child of his genius.

A journey to Russia at the invitation of the Russian consul-general, Mr. Benckhausen, with whom he went as nominal secretary, and the contribution to the *Monthly Repository* of five short poems fill up the time until the appearance of "Paracelsus." Most remarkable among these short poems were "Porphyria's Lover" and "Johannes Agricola in Meditation," of which Mr. Gosse says, "It is a curious matter for reflection that two poems so unique in their construction and conception, so modern, so interesting, so new, could be printed without attracting attention so far as it would appear from any living creature."

Paracelsus was suggested as a subject to Browning by Count de Ripert Monclar, a young French Royalist, who, while spending his summers in England, formed a friendship with the poet. The absence of love in the story seemed to him afterwards a drawback, but Browning, having read up the literature of Paracelsus at the British Museum, decided to follow his friend's suggestion, and according to promise dedicated the poem to Count Monclar.

In the days when he was writing "Paracelsus" Browning was fond of drawing inspiration from midnight rambles in the Dulwich woods, and he used often to compose in the open air. Here we may perhaps find an explanation of the fact that in these earlier poems there is a constant interfusion of nature imagery which, later, when the poet "fared up and down amid men," gave place to the human emotions upon which his thoughts became concentred, or appeared only at rare intervals.

Mr. Fox, always ready to praise the young poet

whom he had been the first to recognize, was upon the publication of "Paracelsus" seconded by John Forster, who wrote an appreciative article about it in the *Examiner*.

If "Paracelsus" did not win popularity, it gained the poet many friends among the literary men of the day. From this period dates the acquaintanceship of notabilities like Serjeant Talfourd, Horne, Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Harriet Martineau, Miss Mitford, Monckton Milnes, Dickens, Wordsworth, Landor, and others. The most important in its consequences of his new friendships was that begun with the celebrated actor William Macready, to whom he was introduced by Mr. Fox. Macready, delighted with Browning, shortly after asked him to a New Year's party at his house at Elstree.

Every one who met the poet seemed attracted by his personality. Macready said he looked more like a youthful poet than any man he had ever seen. Mr. Sharpe's description of him from hearsay is more definite. As a young man he appears to have had a certain ivory delicacy of coloring. He appeared taller than he was, partly because of his rare grace of movement and partly from a characteristic high poise of the head when listening intently to music or conversation. Even then he had the expressive wave of the hand which in later years was as full of various meanings as the *Ecco* of an Italian.

A swift alertness pervaded him noticeably as much in the rapid change of expression, in the deepening and illuming colors of his singularly expressive eyes, and in his sensitive mouth, as in his greyhound-like apprehension, which so often grasped the subject in its entirety before its propounder himself realized its significance. His

hair — then of a brown so dark as to appear black — was so beautiful in its heavy, sculpturesque waves as frequently to attract attention. His voice then had a rare flute-like tone, clear, sweet, and resonant.

The influence of Macready turned the poet's thoughts toward writing for the stage. A drama, "Narses," was discussed, but for some reason abandoned, and the subject of Strafford was decided upon in its place.

The occasion upon which the decision was made gives an attractive glimpse of the young Browning receiving his first social honor. It was at a dinner at Talfourd's after the performance of "Ion," in which Macready acted. Mr. Sharpe says: —

"To his surprise and gratification, Browning found himself placed next but one to his host and immediately opposite Macready, who sat between two gentlemen, one calm as a summer evening, the other with a tempestuous youth dominating his sixty years, whom the young poet at once recognized as Wordsworth and Walter Savage Landor. When Talfourd rose to propose the toast of 'The Poets of England,' every one probably expected that Wordsworth would be named to respond; but with a kindly grace, the host, after flattering remarks upon the two great men then honoring him by sitting at his table, coupled his toast with the name of the youngest of the poets of England, Mr. Robert Browning, the author of 'Paracelsus.' According to Miss Mitford, he responded with grace and modesty, looking even younger than he was."

The conversation turning upon the drama, Macready said, "Write a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America." The reply came: "Shall

it be historical and English? What do you say to a drama on Strafford?"

"Sordello" had already been begun, but "Strafford" and a journey to Italy were to intervene before it was finished. "Strafford" was performed at Covent Garden, May 1, 1837, with Macready as Strafford and Helen Faucit as Lady Carlisle, was well received, and would probably have had a long run had it not been for difficulties which arose in the theatre management.

If Shelley was the paramount influence of his youthful years, from the time of his Italian journey in 1838, Italy became an influence which was henceforth to exert its magic over his work. He liked to call Italy his university. In "Sordello" he had already chosen an Italian subject, and his journey was undertaken partly with the idea of gaining personal experience of the scenes wherein the tragedy of Sordello's soul was enacted.

It was published in 1840, and except for a notice in the *Eclectic Review*, and the appreciation of a few friends, was ignored. A world not over-sensitive to the beauties of his previous work, could hardly be expected to welcome enthusiastically a poem so complex in its historical setting and so full of philosophy. Even the keenest intellects approach this poem with the feeling that they are about to attack a problem; for in spite of undoubted power and many beauties, it must be confessed that the luxuriance of the poet's mental force often unduly overbalances his sense of artistic proportion. Evidently the world was frightened. The little breeze, with which Browning's career began, instead of developing as it normally should into a strong wind of universal recognition, died out, and for

twenty years nothing he could do seemed to win for him his just deserts, though his very next poem, "Pippa Passes," showed him already a consummate master of his forces both on the artistic side and in the special realm which he chose, the development of the soul.

"Pippa Passes," "King Victor and King Charles," and "The Return of the Druses" lay in his desk for some time without a publisher. He finally arranged with Edward Moxon to bring them out in pamphlet form, using cheap type, each issue to consist of a sixteen-page form, printed in double columns. This was the beginning of the now celebrated series, "Bells and Pomegranates." They were issued from 1841 to 1846, and included all the dramas and a number of short poems.

The only one of these poems with a story other than literary, is "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," written for Macready, and performed at Drury Lane, on February 11, 1843. A favorite weapon in the hands of the Philistines has been the often reiterated statement that the performance was a failure. A letter from Browning to Mr. Hill, editor of the *Daily News*, at the time of the revival of this drama by Lawrence Barrett in 1884, drawn out by the same old falsehood, gives the truth in regard to the matter, and should silence once for all the ubiquitous Philistines.

"Macready received and accepted the play, while he was engaged at the Haymarket, and retained it for Drury Lane, of which I was ignorant that he was about to become the manager: he accepted it at the instigation of nobody. . . . When the Drury Lane season began, Macready informed me that he would act the play when he had brought out two others, — 'The Patrician's

Daughter' and 'Plighted Troth.' Having done so, he wrote to me that the former had been unsuccessful in money-drawing, and the latter had 'smashed his arrangements altogether': but he would still produce my play. In my ignorance of certain symptoms better understood by Macready's professional acquaintances — I had no notion that it was a proper thing, in such a case, to release him from his promise; on the contrary, I should have fancied that such a proposal was offensive. Soon after, Macready begged that I would call on him: he said the play had been read to the actors the day before, 'and laughed at from beginning to end;' on my speaking my mind about this, he explained that the reading had been done by the prompter, a grotesque person with a red nose and wooden leg, ill at ease in the love scenes, and that he would himself make amends by reading the play next morning, — which he did, and very adequately, — but apprised me that in consequence of the state of his mind, harassed by business and various troubles, the principal character must be taken by Mr. Phelps; and again I failed to understand, . . . that to allow at Macready's theatre any other than Macready to play the principal part in a new piece was suicidal, and I really believed I was meeting his exigencies by accepting the substitute. At the rehearsal, Macready announced that Mr. Phelps was ill, and that he himself would read the part: on the third rehearsal, Mr. Phelps appeared for the first time . . . while Macready more than read, rehearsed the part. The next morning Mr. Phelps waylaid me to say . . . that Macready would play Tresham on the ground that himself, Phelps, was unable to do so. . . . He added that he could not expect me to waive such an advantage, — but that if I were prepared to waive it, 'he would take ether, sit up all night, and have the words in his memory by next day.'' I bade him follow me to the greenroom, and hear what I decided upon — which was that, as Macready had given him the part, he should keep it: this was on a Thursday; he rehearsed on

Friday and Saturday, — the play being acted the same evening, — *of the fifth day after the 'reading' by Macready.* Macready at once wished to reduce the importance of the play . . . tried to leave out so much of the text, that I baffled him by getting it printed in four and twenty hours, by Moxon's assistance. He wanted me to call it 'The Sister!' — and I have before me . . . the stage-acting copy, with two lines of his own insertion to avoid the tragical ending — Tresham was to announce his intention of going into a monastery! all this, to keep up the belief that Macready, and Macready alone, could produce a veritable 'tragedy' unproduced before. Not a shilling was spent on scenery or dresses. If your critic considers this treatment of the play an instance of 'the failure of powerful and experienced actors' to insure its success, — I can only say that my own opinion was shown by at once breaking off a friendship . . . which had a right to be plainly and simply told that the play I had contributed as a proof of it would, through a change of circumstances, no longer be to my friend's advantage. . . . Only recently, . . . when the extent of his pecuniary embarrassments at that time was made known, could I in a measure understand his motives — less than ever understand why he so strangely disguised them. If 'applause' means success, the play thus maimed and maltreated was successful enough; it 'made way' for Macready's own Benefit, and the theatre closed a fortnight after."

Browning's second visit to Italy took place in the autumn of 1844, from which he returned to meet with the supreme spiritual influence of his life. "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" had just been published, and Browning expressing his enthusiasm for it to Mr. Kenyon, a dear friend of his and a cousin of Miss Barrett's, the latter immediately suggested that Browning should write and tell her of his delight in it. The corre-

spondence soon developed into a meeting which was at first refused by Miss Barrett in a few self-depreciative words, "There is nothing to see in me, nothing to hear in me, I am a weed fit for the ground and darkness."

Mr. Browning's fate was sealed at the first meeting, we are told; but Miss Barrett, conscious of the obstacle offered by her ill-health, was not easily won, and only consented, at last, with the proviso that their marriage should depend upon improvement in her health.

Though the new joy in her life seemed to give her fresh strength, her doctor told her, in the summer of 1846, that her only hope of recovery depended upon her spending the coming winter in Italy. Her father having absolutely refused to hear of such a course, she was persuaded to consent to a private marriage with Mr. Browning, which took place on September 12, 1846, at Marylebone Church. A week later they started for Italy. Mrs. Orr writes: —

"In the late afternoon or evening of September 19, Mrs. Browning, attended by her maid and her dog, stole away from her father's house. The family were at dinner, at which meal she was not in the habit of joining them; her sisters, Henrietta and Arabel, had been throughout in the secret of her attachment and in full sympathy with it; in the case of the servants she was also sure of friendly connivance. There was no difficulty in her escape, but that created by the dog, which might be expected to bark its consciousness of the unusual situation. She took him into her confidence. She said, 'O Flush, if you make a sound, I am lost.' And Flush understood, as what good dog would not, and crept after his mistress in silence."

Mr. Barrett never forgave her and never saw her again. The surprise and consternation of Mr. Brown-

ing's family was soon transformed into love for Mrs. Browning, while Mr. Kenyon, who had not been told because, as Mrs. Browning said, she did not wish to implicate any one in the deception she was obliged to practise against her father, was overjoyed at the result of his kindly offices in bringing the two poets together.

After a journey full of suffering for Mrs. Browning and the tenderest devotion on the part of Mr. Browning, they halted at Pisa, memorable as the spot where Mrs. Browning presented her husband with the matchless "Sonnets from the Portuguese." Mrs. Browning's health improved greatly in the genial climate.

The whole of their married life, with the exception of occasional summers in England and two winters in Paris, was spent in Italy; and what that married life was in its harmonious blending of two unusually congenial souls we have abundant evidence in the glimpses obtained from Mrs. Browning's letters, and the recollections of it in the minds of their many friends.

In the summer of 1847 they established themselves in Florence in the Casa Guidi. It became practically their Italian home, varied by sojourns in Ancona, at the baths of Lucca, Venice, and winters in Rome in 1854 and 1859.

In Florence, March 9, 1849, their son was born, and to Mrs. Browning's life, especially, was added one more element of intense happiness. Mrs. Orr thinks that in Pompilia, in "The Ring and the Book," is reflected the maternal joy as Browning saw it revealed in Mrs. Browning's relation to her son. A shadow was at the same time cast over Browning's life by the death of his mother, who died just as the news was

received of the birth of her grandchild. Mrs. Browning, writing to a friend, said, "My husband has been in the greatest anguish. . . . He has loved his mother as such passionate natures only can love, and I never saw a man so bowed down in an extremity of sorrow, — never."

The first effect of Browning's marriage seems to have been to put his muse to sleep. Up to 1850 the only events in his literary career were the performance of the "Blot" at Sadler's Wells in 1848, and the issue of a collected edition of his works in 1849. In 1850, in Florence, he wrote "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day," and in Paris, 1857, the "Essay on Shelley" to be prefixed to twenty-five letters of Shelley's, that afterwards turned out to be spurious.

The fifty poems in "Men and Women" complete the record of Browning's work during his wife's life. They appeared in 1855, and reflect very directly new sources of inspiration which had come into his life with his marriage.

Though Mr. and Mrs. Browning led a comparatively quiet life, they gathered around them, wherever they were, a distinguished circle of friends. In the early days at Florence they much enjoyed the society of Margaret Fuller Ossoli. Joseph Milsand and George Sand — the first a cherished friend, the last simply an acquaintance — connect themselves with their life in Paris, while in London and Rome all the bright particular stars of the time circled about them, some of whom were the Storys, the Hawthornes, the Carlyles, the Kemble sisters, Cardinal Manning, Sir Frederick Leighton, Rossetti, Val Princeps, and Landor.

Mrs. Browning's death at dawn, on the 29th of June, 1861, cut short the golden period of these

Italian days. Even in his bereavement he had cause to be poignantly happy. For he had watched beside his wife on that last night, and she, weak, though suffering little and without presentiment of the end which even to him seemed not so imminent, had given him, as he wrote, — "what my heart will keep till I see her again and longer, — the most perfect expression of her love to me within my whole knowledge of her." He added, "I shall grow still, I hope, but my root is taken and remains." He left Florence never to return. His settling in London that winter was a result of his wife's death, destined to bring him into closer touch with an English public which was to like him yet. The change was dictated by his care for his son's education, whose well-being he considered a trust from his wife.

In 1862 he wrote from Biarritz of "Pen's" enjoyment of his holidays, adding, "for me I have got on by having a great read at Euripides besides attending to my own matters, my new poem that is about to be and of which the whole is pretty well in my head — the Roman murder story." But the Roman murder story was long in taking shape as "The Ring and the Book." It had been conceived in one of his last June evenings at Casa Guidi, but the rude break in his life made by Mrs. Browning's death remains marked in the record of this work's incubation. During the next years spent in London, with holidays in Brittany, work went steadily on, first for the three-volume collected edition of 1863 of his works, and then for "Dramatis Personæ," published in the year following, before "The Ring and the Book" came out at last, in 1868. With the appearance of this and the six-volume edition of his works, the poet began to reap the abundant fruits of a slow but solidly founded fame.

his son's marriage in 1887, his removal to the house he bought in De Vere Gardens, the gradual weakening of his robust health in his last years, his painless death in Venice, in his son's Palazzo Rezzonico on the very day, December 12, 1889, of the issue of "Asolando," in London, his burial in Westminster Abbey in Poets' Corner, December 31, and the story of Robert Browning's earthly life is told.

A tablet set in the outer wall of the Palazzo Rezzonico, in Venice, commemorates Browning's life and death in the "woman-country" he loved, and in whose friendly earth Elizabeth Barrett Browning was buried. The inscription on this tablet is as follows:

A
ROBERTO BROWNING
morto in questo palazzo
il 12 *Dicembre* 1889
Venezia
pose

"Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'"

In no memorial, however, could the value of the Italian influence on the English genius of Robert and Elizabeth Browning be so well recorded as in their own poetic work.

Charlotte Porter.
Helen A. Clarke.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE criticism so often quoted of the Review which laconically dismissed "Pauline" as "a piece of pure bewilderment," certainly had some grounds for coming to such a decision. The discerning eye, however, might have at once recognized that it was not the bewilderment of a fool by any means, but that of a highly organized artistic temperament not yet perfectly in harmony with a mind which still groped its way among the multitude of thoughts and fancies engendered in it by the floodgates of knowledge pouring into it from many sources. Any one so endowed cannot at once get over the surprise of his own dawning powers; the processes of his mind and the impulses of his heart are of paramount interest to him, and his first poetical outbreak is bound to have much of the subjective element in it. He does not stop to consider whether the world is as interested as he is in his own sensations, and very likely the charge of egotism will be brought and deserved.

It is true that Browning has attempted to give even Pauline a dramatic cast by representing the speaker as having attained years of discretion after a long and varied series of soul-experiences, — a favorite *ruse* with the young writer who has experienced nothing. But what we actually have in "Pauline" is the imagina-

tive development of a soul colored by the purely subjective sensations of a young man with little knowledge of life and its vicissitudes at first hand. Any organic unity the poem has is given it through the fact that the aim of this struggling soul seems to be to discover God for himself after having had all the old grounds of faith swept from under his feet. Immaturity is shown in the exaggerated moods of exaltation and despair into which the young man of the poem alternately falls, and sometimes so rapidly as to take one's breath away. Nevertheless there is much that is intensely interesting in the study of the feelings and motives working within just such immature though latently powerful minds. Often the smouldering power flames forth in some finely turned phrase or brilliant thought. The picture of Agamemnon,

> "that king
> Treading the purple calmly to his death,
> While round him, like the clouds of eve, all dusk,
> The giant shades of fate, silently flitting,
> Pile the dim outline of the coming doom,"

puts even Æschylus into the shade, who makes the king say simply, "I go treading on purples to my house."

One of the outbursts in thought is the fine analysis of the artistic temperament in the passage where the poet describes to Pauline his own mental furnishings, the first part of which runs: —

> "I am made up of an intensest life,
> Of a most clear idea of consciousness
> Of self, distinct from all its qualities,
> From all affections, passions, feelings, powers;
> And thus far it exists, if tracked, in all:
> But linked, in me, to self-supremacy,
> Existing as a centre to all things,
> Most potent to create and rule and call

Upon all things to minister to it;
And to a principle of restlessness
Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel, all —
This is myself; and I should thus have been
Though gifted lower than the meanest soul."

All artists (or rather people of artistic temperament), whether poets, musicians, actors, or painters, seem to possess this sort of over-consciousness by means of which they may control all emotions, passions, and thoughts, and direct them to artistic ends. Added to this is the love of beauty and the desire to go through, in one's own person, all possible experiences and sensations where beauty may be found, in order to supply material to this commanding over-consciousness.

Wiser than the class of critics who contend that poets must perforce write out of their own experience, this poet realizes the danger in such desires, which if literally carried out would lead to moral ruin, — such moral ruin, for example, as that seen in Nero as his character is interpreted in the novel "Quo Vadis" by Sienkiewicz, where the artistic tendencies are finally crushed out by the unbridled seeking for all experiences, however brutal and degraded. Fortunately for the poet in "Pauline," he has a vivid and sympathetic imagination to serve him in place of actual experience, and through this he lives with the heroes and bards of old, marshalling them into the present in glowing pictures for Pauline's benefit.

A definite biographical touch is given in his admiration for Shelley. The story of Browning's first acquaintanceship with Shelley is too well known an incident of his biography to need repeating. All that Shelley meant to a young mind of liberal tendencies is reflected in the fine passages in the poem referring to

him as "Sun-treader, life and light be thine forever," and "My choice fell not so much on a system as a man." Shelley's iconoclasm and enthusiasm for liberty and freedom was an inspiration to many at a time when the ideals of the French Revolution had not yet ceased to burn in men's minds. The aspiration for social regeneration sung with such spirit and fervor by Shelley suggests little, however, in the way of definite plans for the carrying out of such ideals; and the transition to Plato, who had elaborated a plan for a perfect state, would be quite natural to the youth bubbling with the fervor of reform.

The awakening from all these dreams when a closer view of life is obtained, and upon all sides loom up the insurmountable obstacles to be conquered before a perfect state of society can be reached, the despair following upon this awakening, plunging the young man into a vortex of dissipation, are well imagined, but the vagueness with which he refers to these life-experiences as contrasted with the definiteness of his knowledge in regard to book-lore indicates that at that time the poet had not seen enough of life even to portray it through his sympathies and imagination. One feels, too, a truth to reality in his statement that he can love nothing, sense only supplying him with an appreciation of that which he has never emotionally felt. That is a "dull truth" much more likely to be borne in upon one at the beginning of life than later, and there are marks which show that, though the poet of the poem finally loves, the poet outside is still unawakened on this point. A lover who begins by telling his beloved one that he can give her faith but not love, and who finally succeeds in whipping up his emotions to a declaration that now at last he loves her, has certainly not yet felt that ove -

whelming revelation of divine love through earthly love which Browning later describes as "flashes struck from midnights," "fire-flames noondays kindle." There is, besides, a somewhat false ring about his love for God, quite different from that which appears later in Browning's work. In fact, the signs are all present of an immature heart as well as an immature mind, though both are bound through aspiration to reach glorious fruition. In the mean time the boyish admiration for Shelley's intense and aspiring personality is the young Browning's guiding star, though later his philosophy was to veer to almost the opposite pole from that of Shelley's. Instead of looking to perfection as an inheritance of earth such as is pictured by Shelley in symbols, cosmic and spiritual, in the closing act of his "Prometheus Unbound," Browning's ideal grew to be eternal æons of struggle and growth, relative evil always holding its appointed place as a spur toward further effort.

While no one can read this poem without having the sensuous imagery of Keats and the visionary imaginativeness of Shelley suggested to him, there is even here the promise of greater power than either of these poets ever commanded. "Alastor" almost unconsciously comes to the mind in connection with "Pauline." That *distrait* young man, occupied solely with his own sensations, seems to have come to life again. Upon a closer comparison of the two, it will be found that the thought in "Alastor" is very thin, the poem depending entirely for its success upon the series of beautiful word pictures, entrancing in themselves, but after all not very definitely suggestive of the progress of Alastor's soul in the search for the ideal of love. Conversely, Browning's "Pauline" is rich in moods and

thoughts as well as beautiful images, but the poet was not sufficiently master of the situation to round them into a complete harmony, hence the lack of organic unity.

Whatever may be the admitted defects in "Pauline," it is a poem which, in spite of Browning's wishing he might disclaim it, will always be cherished by three classes of persons, — those who admire Browning, and are interested to see in this the first fruits of his genius, the unmistakable signs of approaching originality and greatness; those who are interested in the psychology of the poetic mind, for nowhere will be found a better presentation of what might be called its double consciousness, — the over-consciousness, standing off at arm's length, as it were, and viewing all moods, all passions, of the normal consciousness as so much material to be woven into artistic products; and lastly, by those who, like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, love good poetry wherever they find it. The passages in which classical allusions are introduced and the comparisons built upon nature-descriptions reach the high-water mark of beauty. Browning has done nothing finer of this sort, and if he had not been destined to strike out new paths for himself, he might have outrivalled Beauty's special devotees, a Keats or a Swinburne, in rare and lovely imagery, so crowning the past. But for him was reserved a greater fate.

"Paracelsus" appeared in less than three years after "Pauline," and showed in many respects an extraordinary gain in power. The poet could now present, with admirable dramatic similitude, a character consistently developing and learning through the lessons of life. Even if it be admitted that in his final philosophical utterance he shows more of the nineteenth-century spirit than that of the sixteenth, Paracelsus stands out

as one of the great and vivid creations of literature. Of the other characters in this dramatic poem not so much can be said. Festus, in so far as having any influence on the action is concerned, is little more than a peg upon which Paracelsus hangs his voluminous harangues as to his own wonderful future. He may, however, be taken as a very good type of the inaction of the conventional forces of life, — the well-meaning friends who are incapable of an understanding sympathy with a genius among them, yet love him, and may even blindly adore his powers, but never throw out a single suggestion that is not directly in opposition to every aspiration of his soul. Michal is the silent appendage to this highly amiable, respectable, and uninteresting personage.

So far, Browning was evidently afraid or unable to attempt more than a passive ghost in the shape of a woman. Pauline's mission in life was apparently to listen to her lover talk, with the privilege of leaning over him when he was occupied with his books, and Michal was further blessed by the opportunity of being audience to two men.

If Festus be taken as a type of the conventional forces of life, Aprile may be said to typify the spiritually awakening forces of life; and while he undoubtedly has a "moving" effect in the soul-action of the drama, — the only action it has, — he is too vague as a personality to be considered a fully developed dramatic presentment of character. The character-interest centres consequently on Paracelsus himself. He has a certain kinship with the poet in "Pauline," in so far as he seeks to realize an ideal; but the vagueness of the latter's aim gives place to a very definite purpose on the part of Paracelsus. He aspires to the acquisition

of absolute knowledge, and feels born within him the capabilities for attaining this end, and when attained it is to be devoted to enlarging the possibilities of man's life. The whole race is to be elevated at once. Man may not be doomed to cope with seraphs, yet by the exercise of human strength alone he hopes man may one day beat God's angels.

He is a revolter, however, against the magical and alchemistic methods of the age, which seek for the welfare of men through the elixir of youth or the philosopher's stone. He especially disclaims such puerile schemes in the passionate moment when he has realized how futile all his life-long efforts have been.

> "Let me weep
> My youth and its brave hopes, all dead and gone,
> In tears which burn! Would I were sure to win
> Some startling secret in their stead, a tincture
> Of force to flush old age with youth, or breed
> Gold, or imprison moonbeams till they change
> To opal shafts! — only that, hurling it
> Indignant back, I might convince myself
> My aims remained supreme and pure as ever!"

He stands, indeed, at the threshold of a new world. He has a glimmering of the true scientific methods which would discover first the secrets of life's laws, and then use these natural laws to bring about life's betterment, instead of hoping for salvation through the discovery of some magic secret by means of which life's laws might be overcome. Yet he is sufficiently of his own superstitious age to desire and expect fairly magical results from the laws he hopes to discover. The creed which spurs him to the quest is his belief that truth is inborn in the soul; but to set this truth free and make it of use to mankind correspondences in outer nature must be found. An intuitive mind like Paracelsus's

will recognize these natural corollaries of the intuition wherever it finds them; and these are what Paracelsus goes forth over the earth to seek and find, sure that he will "arrive." One illustration of the results so obtained is seen in the doctrine of the signatures of plants according to which the flowers, leaves, and fruits of plants indicate by their color or markings, etc., the particular diseases they are intended to cure. The real Paracelsus practised medicine upon this theory.

Though such methods are some distance from those of the modern scientist, who deduces his laws from careful and patient observation of the processes of nature, they go a step toward his in seeking laws in nature to correspond to intuition, which is the mother of hypothesis. Like Columbus, seeking the passage to India, he fails of his purpose, but opens up a "passage to more than India" — a new land lies before him.

Browning's presentation of the attitude of mind and the place held by Paracelsus in the development of science is exactly in line with the most recent criticisms of this extraordinary man's life. According to these he fluctuated between the systems of magic then prevalent, and scientific observation, but always finally threw in the balance of his opinion on the side of scientific ways of working; and above all he made the great step from a belief in the influence of nature upon man to that of the existence of parallelisms between nature-processes and human processes.

Though he thus opened up new vistas for the benefit of man, he must necessarily be a failure from his own point of view, with his "India" not found, — his absolute truth unattained; and it is upon this side that Browning dwells. For a moment he is somewhat reassured by the apparition of Aprile, scarcely a creature of flesh

and blood, more the spirit of art who aspires to love infinitely and has found the attainment of such love as impossible as Paracelsus has found the attainment of knowledge. Both have desired to help men, but Paracelsus has hoped to help them rather through the perfecting of their physical being, Aprile through giving man as he is, infinite sympathy and through creating forms of beauty which would show him his own thoughts and hopes glorified by the all-seeing touch of the artist.

Paracelsus recognizes his deficient sympathy for mankind, and tries to make up for it in his own way by giving out of the fulness of his knowledge to men. The scornful and proud reformer had not, however, truly learned the lesson of love, and verily has his reward when he is turned against by those whom he would teach. Then the old ideal seizes upon him again, and still under the influence of Aprile he seeks in human experience the loves and passions of mankind which he learns through Aprile he had neglected, for the ever-illusive secret; but neither does success attend him here, and only on his death-bed does his vision clear up and we have Paracelsus converted into a seer, the full blossom of nineteenth-century thought being read into his utterances.

In giving Paracelsus this seer-like quality, Browning has simply rested upon the fundamental truths of Paracelsus's philosophy, — the harmonizing of the intuitional and the experimental, which carried forward to the nineteenth century would give on the experimental side the truth of the evolutionary development of nature, and on the intuitional side the truth that love is the power at work under the laws of growth and development. Paracelsus learned through Aprile to trust the

intuitions of the heart rather than those of the mind, and now sees that the laws working in the world of nature work also in the moral world; that even feeble human aspirations are the embryos of future glorious, joy-bringing ideals.

The material cast of his earlier standpoint is perhaps still evident in his picture of a future where "climbs pleasure its heights for ever and for ever." It is Shelley's ideal of earthly perfection with the added zest of infinite development, an eternal going on and on, with no stumbling-blocks of evil to thwart the soul in its search for new blisses.

At this time Browning seems to consider evil more particularly as a lack of development. Later the pain of evil became uppermost in his mind, and in trying to account for evil he became so enamoured with the uses of evil that he grew to prefer a future well sown with evils, to try the soul's metal and give strength in their overcoming.

Browning himself was almost as much of a seer in these closing passages, for it must be remembered that this splendid presentation of the philosophy of evolution preceded by thirty years or so the work of Darwin and Spencer. Possessing an insight resembling in its logical clearness that of the great synthetic thinker of the age, Browning boldly leaped the chasm which was yawning between science and religion. With Spencer he recognized the relativity of knowledge, a truth which the ordinary scientist, flushed with the success attending his brilliant discoveries of the workings of phenomena, was in danger of forgetting; with Spencer he recognized this failure of finite knowledge as a pledge of the existence of the Infinite, but where Spencer bowed in reverence before the "Unknown God,"

Browning, turning from the proofs of the intellect to the "still small voice" of the heart, ventured to declare upon its authority that God was love.

Not more than a small proportion of the world has yet advanced to the plane of thought expressed thus powerfully seventy years ago.

It is interesting to note in this connection that when Dr. Furnivall asked Browning some questions as to his attitude toward Darwin, Browning replied in a letter: "In reality, all that seems proved in Darwin's scheme was a conception familiar to me from the beginning: see in 'Paracelsus' the progressive development from senseless matter to organized, until man's appearance."

Browning has just as faithfully portrayed the outer man, Paracelsus. He has glozed over none of his faults, — his vanity, his bumptiousness, his scorn of his fellow-men, his license, — but he has brought out the inmost truth within his soul and shown how his faults were the necessary defects of an ardent nature carving out a new path in an unsympathetic environment, and failing of the attainment of his cherished ideal in an age which had not yet been made wise to know that absolute knowledge is beyond man's ken.

There are still subtle echoes of Shelley to be found in this poem, — witness Aprile's lovely song, — but those which Paracelsus sings touch a note of fascinating originality. The beautiful "Over the Sea our Galleys went" is one of those inevitable creations where art seems to have passed through its apprenticeship as art and reached a sphere where art becomes not nature but the natural, better described by the poet himself in "Transcendentalism," —

> "He with a look-you vents a brace of rhymes,
> And in there breaks the sudden rose itself."

The closing speeches are convincing examples of how so-called "dull philosophy" may be made "musical as is Apollo's lute," if the poet be wielder of rich verse harmonies and magnificent symbols.

"Sordello" and "Strafford," although the next of the young poet's works in chronological order, have, on account of considerations of space, been put together in a single volume. "Sordello" falls naturally into the first period of Browning's work, when it seemed necessary for him to disburden himself of the seething philosophies that tormented his brain, and when the dramatic force of his genius was still somewhat in abeyance. In "Strafford" the dramatic ground is firmly broken, and by the time "Pippa Passes" appears he is able to touch the highest pinnacles of dramatic art in such a scene as that of Sebald and Ottima, or in the characterizing of the little wicked street girls. He had created his first woman in "Strafford," Lady Carlisle, and is so pleased with the work of his hands that now he makes a drama in which everything hangs upon the loving heart of a little girl, while revolving round her are women of various degrees of moral development, from the selfish, sensual Ottima to the pure-souled Phene.

The poet has often been criticised for making Pippa talk Browningese, but certainly the strong impression left upon the mind after reading the play is that she is a childlike presence; and upon looking more closely at her, it will be found that all her thoughts are eminently childlike. She hopes she will have a fine day for her holiday, because it is her one day and matters much for her, though to the great ones of Asolo it makes little difference, because all days bring happiness to them. She longs for love such as that these

great ones know, — the lovers, the bride, the mother and son, — and since she can have no such love will be satisfied with God's love, the best after all. How natural it is that she should spend her holiday trying to imagine herself in the places of those who are so seemingly unapproachable, and wondering if it might ever chance that she could touch their lives. She cannot by any possibility be considered responsible for the dainty workmanship and delicate thought of the songs she sings, which we may presume she had learned from some one. To take as a last test her manner of expressing herself, her speech will not, we think, be found to contain philosophy beyond the range of a bright child, or poetical fancies beyond her imagination. She pictures day boiling up over night's brim, and plays with the sunbeams caught in her wash-basin, and being like all children, watches the reflections of the sun in the water dance on the ceiling. The one slight ground for the criticism rests upon the fact that she occasionally uses words and phrases suggestive of certain mannerisms in speech, but that is something no poet has ever succeeded entirely in disguising. Even Shakespeare's Caliban sometimes talks like the author of the sonnets.

Ottima is drawn with a few broad, clear strokes. A woman "magnificent in sin," indeed, because so courageous that she awakens the same sort of respect Lady Macbeth does in contrast with the cowardliness of Macbeth or Sebald. All sympathy would go to Sebald for his repentance of his crime when he hears the pure voice and song of Pippa ; but to repudiate the woman he has loved and regard only his own salvation shows that his love had been false, makes his crime doubly horrible, and reveals the depths of self-

ishness in his nature. Ottima, on the other hand, proves herself true to her passions. She hates Luca in death as she hated him in life; her love for Sebald never wavers an instant, even in the face of his crime, while the sincerity of her repentance as well as her unselfishness comes out forcefully at the end, when she exclaims, "Not me — to him, O God, be merciful." For dramatic intensity it is one of the most tremendous scenes in all literature. The morbid dwelling upon the literal facts of the murder by Sebald, the efforts of Ottima to divert his mind, now attempting to incite his love by recalling past episodes in their life, now distracting his attention toward trivial matters; the nervous rapid speech, unvarnished by any ornamentation not the legitimate outgrowth of passion — all combine to make of this scene a masterful soul-stirring piece of realism. The same qualities, though not in such perfection, are found in the other dramatic episodes of the play, which taken all together present a variety of human types wherein good and evil are mixed; and some who are to all appearances utterly depraved, like the villain Bluphocks or the fiendish instigator of the cruel practical joke upon Jules. The construction of this play does not follow the ordinary rules of unity, nevertheless it has its own sort of unity. It may be described as a series of dramatic episodes, each giving some crucial point in the moral development of the characters portrayed. The lives of the characters in the episodes are not intricately interwoven, as with the persons of an ordinary drama, — in fact, they do not touch: but this gives a certain *vraisemblance* to the life in any town, where tragedies are born and die while the world wags on unknowing. It is the sweet influence of Pippa that binds them all to-

gether, through her unconscious power of awakening them at these crucial moments in their lives. She is the all-conquering power of goodness dissipating evil impulses, whether springing from the nature of those she persuades with her artless eloquence, as with Sebald and Ottima and Luigi, or induced by machinations from outside, as with Jules. While thus flooding the lives of others with light, she is herself threatened with the greatest danger. Diabolic forces are working against her, and it is a beautiful piece of dramatic justice that the last of her good offices on her simply spent holiday was the arousing to a sense of his own iniquity the selfish Monsignor, who for personal greed plotted her ruin. Thus in saving him she saved herself, and goes home, the same simple child of the morning, somewhat weary, and wondering if she could ever touch the lives of the very people she has saved from moral ruin.

This was the second piece of purely imaginative work done by Browning, and in its power of character-creation is infinitely ahead of his first attempt in "Pauline." In "King Victor and King Charles" he goes back to history for his subject, and according to the habit which grew upon him chose a historic episode about which ordinary readers know little. Though the subject cannot compare in interest with that of "Strafford," it has dramatic possibilities, and Browning has made the most of them. It differs from Browning's other work on historical subjects in that the interest is purely personal, the action in the drama, just as in life, not having any larger social bearings. A great historical movement is centred, for example, in the persons of Strafford and Pym, but King Victor's abdication was an incident which, according to all the

histories on the subject, had absolutely no effect upon the politics of Europe, and certainly represented no clash of fundamental principles in government. From the slight hints of history Browning has created a most interesting group of characters, whose motives and emotions he unfolds toward inevitable action and events as they are known to have happened. Victor and Charles are both complex in their natures, but one has the complexity born of the supreme desire to serve his own ends, the other a complexity born of the conflict between love for his father and regard for his own dignity and integrity. History is not quite certain on the point of Victor's perfidious treatment of his allies, nor as to whether he abdicated to extricate himself from pending difficulties or merely because he was weary of the cares of the crown. Browning has cleverly made use of both ideas, giving Victor the rôle of perfidy, but making Charles believe him capable of the better impulse. D'Ormea is the only one who really knows all the wily depths of Victor's nature, and Polyxena, with no absolute knowledge, has a woman's intuition that he is deceiving Charles. For these reasons Charles hates D'Ormea, and will not see that the minister is genuinely anxious to help him, and almost quarrels with Polyxena. Not that he himself has any absolute faith in his father; it is rather that through love for his father he would fain blind himself to all faults, and it irritates him that the minister as well as Polyxena should be so well aware of them. His whole action is colored by his desire to justify his father to them. He permitted himself to complain of Victor's treatment to Polyxena, and seemed glad of her sympathy before the abdication, but he seizes upon this as a mark of his father's affection at last, and it

must be sacredly guarded from all suspicion. The Charles of history had an intense admiration for the genius of Victor, and tried most faithfully to model his direction of state affairs upon Victor's methods. In the play Polyxena feels this to be Charles's great weakness. She knows the quality of his powers to be superior in some respects to Victor's, because of the sincerity and goodness of his nature, but he is constantly prevented from reaching a knowledge of his possibilities by his persistent reverence for the parental wisdom. The genuineness of Charles's affection for his father is finally put to the test when he can no longer ignore the fact that Victor means to retake the crown by force. He gives in to D'Ormea to the extent of allowing him to arrest Victor, but at the last moment hands the crown back to Victor. Here Browning gains a dramatic climax, and rounds out Charles's nature by making him stanch in the face of all odds to the supreme influence of his life, his unselfish love for his father. Devotion of this sort has its fine side. One cannot help admiring so complete an example of living up to an all-dominating ideal, yet most people will sympathize with Polyxena, whose ideal was different. She considered Charles's most important duty to be reverence for his prospective office of ruler over the people. She begged him first to bear anything from his father rather than forfeit what God had intrusted to him; but when the power suddenly came to him through suspicious circumstances, she threw her weight upon the side of his refusing it, because with perfect understanding of her husband's nature she knew it would never be a true kingship for Charles as long as Victor's influence should be exerted over him.

The subtle play of motives in this drama is managed with Browning's accustomed skill, but the work has not the peculiar charm of "Pippa Passes," nor the strength of "Strafford," both preceding it. It was, however, to be followed by dramas surpassing all that the poet had yet accomplished in this field.

CHARLOTTE PORTER,
HELEN A. CLARKE.

PAULINE.

A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION.

1833.

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été,
Et ne le sçaurois jamais être. — *Marot.*

Non dubito, quin titulus libri nostri raritate sua quam plurimos alliciat ad legendum : inter quos nonnulli obliquæ opinionis, mente languidi, multi etiam maligni, et in ingenium nostrum ingrati accedent, qui temeraria sua ignorantia, vix conspecto titulo clamabunt. Nos vetita docere, hæresium semina jacere : piis auribus offendiculo, præclaris ingeniis scandalo esse : . . . . adeo conscientiæ suæ consulentes, ut nec Apollo, nec Musæ omnes, neque Angelus de cœlo me ab illorum execratione vindicare queant : quibus et ego nunc consulo, ne scripta nostra legant, nec intelligant, nec meminerint : nam noxia sunt, venenosa sunt : Acherontis ostium est in hoc libro, lapides loquitur, caveant, ne cerebrum illis excutiat. Vos autem, qui æqua mente ad legendum venitis, si tantam prudentiæ discretionem adhibueritis, quantam in melle legendo apes, jam securi legite. Puto namque vos et utilitatis haud parum et voluptatis plurimum accepturos. Quod si qua repereritis, quæ vobis non placeant, mittite illa, nec utimini. Nam et ego vobis illa non Probo, sed Narro. Cætera tamen propterea non respuite . . . . . Ideo, si quid liberius dictum erit, ignoscite adolescentiæ nostræ, qui minor quam adolescens hoc opus composui. — *Hen. Corn. Agrippa, De Occult. Philosoph. in Præfat.*

London : *January* 1833.
V. A. XX.

[This introduction would appear less absurdly pretentious did it apply, as was intended, to a completed struc-

ture of which the poem was meant for only a beginning and remains a fragment.]

Pauline, mine own, bend o'er me — thy soft breast
Shall pant to mine — bend o'er me — thy sweet eyes,
And loosened hair and breathing lips, and arms
Drawing me to thee — these build up a screen
To shut me in with thee, and from all fear;
So that I might unlock the sleepless brood
Of fancies from my soul, their lurking-place,
Nor doubt that each would pass, ne'er to return
To one so watched, so loved and so secured.
But what can guard thee but thy naked love?
Ah dearest, whoso sucks a poisoned wound
Envenoms his own veins! Thou art so good,
So calm — if thou shouldst wear a brow less light
For some wild thought which, but for me, were kept
From out thy soul as from a sacred star!
Yet till I have unlocked them it were vain
To hope to sing; some woe would light on me;
Nature would point at one whose quivering lip
Was bathed in her enchantments, whose brow burned
Beneath the crown to which her secrets knelt,
Who learned the spell which can call up the dead,
And then departed smiling like a fiend
Who has deceived God, — if such one should seek
Again her altars and stand robed and crowned
Amid the faithful! Sad confession first,
Remorse and pardon and old claims renewed,
Ere I can be — as I shall be no more.

I had been spared this shame if I had sat
By thee forever from the first, in place
Of my wild dreams of beauty and of good,
Or with them, as an earnest of their truth:

No thought nor hope having been shut from thee,
No vague wish unexplained, no wandering aim
Sent back to bind on fancy's wings and seek
Some strange fair world where it might be a law;
But, doubting nothing, had been led by thee,
Thro' youth, and saved, as one at length awaked
Who has slept through a peril. Ah vain, vain!

Thou lovest me; the past is in its grave
Tho' its ghost haunts us; still this much is ours,
To cast away restraint, lest a worse thing
Wait for us in the dark. Thou lovest me;
And thou art to receive not love but faith,
For which thou wilt be mine, and smile and take
All shapes and shames, and veil without a fear
That form which music follows like a slave:
And I look to thee and I trust in thee,
As in a Northern night one looks alway
Unto the East for morn and spring and joy
Thou seest then my aimless, hopeless state,
And, resting on some few old feelings won
Back by thy beauty, wouldst that I essay
The task which was to me what now thou art:
And why should I conceal one weakness more?

Thou wilt remember one warm morn when winter
Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first breath
Blew soft from the moist hills; the blackthorn boughs,
So dark in the bare wood, when glistening
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,
Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks
Had violets opening from sleep like eyes.
I walked with thee who knew'st not a deep shame
Lurked beneath smiles and careless words which sought

To hide it till they wandered and were mute,
As we stood listening on a sunny mound
To the wind murmuring in the damp copse,
Like heavy breathings of some hidden thing
Betrayed by sleep; until the feeling rushed
That I was low indeed, yet not so low
As to endure the calmness of thine eyes.
And so I told thee all, while the cool breast
I leaned on altered not its quiet beating:
And long ere words like a hurt bird's complaint
Bade me look up and be what I had been,
I felt despair could never live by thee:
Thou wilt remember. Thou art not more dear
Than song was once to me; and I ne'er sung
But as one entering bright halls where all
Will rise and shout for him: sure I must own
That I am fallen, having chosen gifts
Distinct from theirs — that I am sad and fain
Would give up all to be but where I was,
Not high as I had been if faithful found,
But low and weak yet full of hope, and sure
Of goodness as of life — that I would lose
All this gay mastery of mind, to sit
Once more with them, trusting in truth and love
And with an aim — not being what I am.

Oh Pauline, I am ruined who believed
That though my soul had floated from its sphere
Of wild dominion into the dim orb
Of self — that it was strong and free as ever!
It has conformed itself to that dim orb,
Reflecting all its shades and shapes, and now
Must stay where it alone can be adored.
I have felt this in dreams — in dreams in which

I seemed the fate from which I fled; I felt
A strange delight in causing my decay.
I was a fiend in darkness chained forever
Within some ocean cave; and ages rolled,
Till through the cleft rock, like a moonbeam, came
A white swan to remain with me; and ages
Rolled, yet I tired not of my first free joy
In gazing on the peace of its pure wings:
And then I said "It is most fair to me,
Yet its soft wings must sure have suffered change
From the thick darkness, sure its eyes are dim,
Its silver pinions must be cramped and numbed
With sleeping ages here; it cannot leave me,
For it would seem, in light beside its kind,
Withered, tho' here to me most beautiful."
And then I was a young witch whose blue eyes,
As she stood naked by the river springs,
Drew down a god: I watched his radiant form
Growing less radiant, and it gladdened me;
Till one morn, as he sat in the sunshine
Upon my knees, singing to me of heaven,
He turned to look at me, ere I could lose
The grin with which I viewed his perishing:
And he shrieked and departed and sat long
By his deserted throne, but sunk at last
Murmuring, as I kissed his lips and curled
Around him, "I am still a god — to thee."

Still I can lay my soul bare in its fall,
Since all the wandering and all the weakness
Will be a saddest comment on the song:
And if, that done, I can be young again,
I will give up all gained, as willingly
As one gives up a charm which shuts him out

From hope or part or care in human kind.
As life wanes, all its care and strife and toil
Seem strangely valueless, while the old trees
Which grew by our youth's home, the waving mass
Of climbing plants heavy with bloom and dew,
The morning swallows with their songs like words,
All these seem clear and only worth our thoughts:
So, aught connected with my early life,
My rude songs or my wild imaginings,
How I look on them — most distinct amid
The fever and the stir of after years!

I ne'er had ventured e'en to hope for this,
Had not the glow I felt at His award,
Assured me all was not extinct within:
His whom all honor, whose renown springs up
Like sunlight which will visit all the world,
So that e'en they who sneered at him at first,
Come out to it, as some dark spider crawls
From his foul nets which some lit torch invades,
Yet spinning still new films for his retreat.
Thou didst smile, poet, but can we forgive?

Sun-treader, life and light be thine forever!
Thou art gone from us; years go by and spring
Gladdens and the young earth is beautiful,
Yet thy songs come not, other bards arise,
But none like thee: they stand, thy majesties,
Like mighty works which tell some spirit there
Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn,
Till, its long task completed, it hath risen
And left us, never to return, and all
Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain
The air seems bright with thy past presence yet,
But thou art still for me as thou hast been

When I have stood with thee as on a throne
With all thy dim creations gathered round
Like mountains, and I felt of mould like them,
And with them creatures of my own were mixed,
Like things half-lived, catching and giving life.
But thou art still for me who have adored
Tho' single, panting but to hear thy name
Which I believed a spell to me alone,
Scarce deeming thou wast as a star to men!
As one should worship long a sacred spring
Scarce worth a moth's flitting, which long grasses cross,
And one small tree embowers droopingly —
Joying to see some wandering insect won
To live in its few rushes, or some locust
To pasture on its boughs, or some wild bird
Stoop for its freshness from the trackless air:
And then should find it but the fountain-head,
Long lost, of some great river washing towns
And towers, and seeing old woods which will live
But by its banks untrod of human foot,
Which, when the great sun sinks, lie quivering
In light as some thing lieth half of life
Before God's foot, waiting a wondrous change;
Then girt with rocks which seek to turn or stay
Its course in vain, for it does ever spread
Like a sea's arm as it goes rolling on,
Being the pulse of some great country — so
Wast thou to me, and art thou to the world!
And I, perchance, half feel a strange regret
That I am not what I have been to thee:
Like a girl one has silently loved long
In her first loneliness in some retreat,
When, late emerged, all gaze and glow to view
Her fresh eyes and soft hair and lips which bloom

Like a mountain berry : doubtless it is sweet
To see her thus adored, but there have been
Moments when all the world was in our praise,
Sweeter than any pride of after hours.
Yet, sun-treader, all hail ! From my heart's heart
I bid thee hail ! E'en in my wildest dreams,
I proudly feel I would have thrown to dust
The wreaths of fame which seemed o'erhanging me,
To see thee for a moment as thou art.

And if thou livest, if thou lovest, spirit !
Remember me who set this final seal
To wandering thought — that one so pure as thou
Could never die. Remember me who flung
All honor from my soul, yet paused and said
" There is one spark of love remaining yet,
For I have naught in common with him, shapes
Which followed him avoid me, and foul forms
Seek me, which ne'er could fasten on his mind ;
And though I feel how low I am to him,
Yet I aim not even to catch a tone
Of harmonies he called profusely up ;
So, one gleam still remains, although the last."
Remember me who praise thee e'en with tears,
For nevermore shall I walk calm with thee ;
Thy sweet imaginings are as an air,
A melody some wondrous singer sings,
Which, though it haunt men oft in the still eve,
They dream not to essay ; yet it no less
But more is honored. I was thine in shame,
And now when all thy proud renown is out,
I am a watcher whose eyes have grown dim
With looking for some star which breaks on him
Altered and worn and weak and full of tears.

Autumn has come like spring returned to us,
Won from her girlishness ; like one returned
A friend that was a lover, nor forgets
The first warm love, but full of sober thoughts
Of fading years ; whose soft mouth quivers yet
With the old smile, but yet so changed and still!
And here am I the scoffer, who have probed
Life's vanity, won by a word again
Into my own life — by one little word
Of this sweet friend who lives in loving me,
Lives strangely on my thoughts and looks and words,
As fathoms down some nameless ocean thing
Its silent course of quietness and joy.
O dearest, if indeed I tell the past,
May'st thou forget it as a sad sick dream !
Or if it linger — my lost soul too soon
Sinks to itself and whispers we shall be
But closer linked, two creatures whom the earth
Bears singly, with strange feelings unrevealed
Save to each other ; or two lonely things
Created by some power whose reign is done,
Having no part in God or his bright world.
I am to sing whilst ebbing day dies soft,
As a lean scholar dies worn o'er his book,
And in the heaven stars steal out one by one
As hunted men steal to their mountain watch.
I must not think, lest this new impulse die
In which I trust ; I have no confidence :
So, I will sing on fast as fancies come ;
Rudely, the verse being as the mood it paints.

I strip my mind bare, whose first elements
I shall unveil — not as they struggled forth
In infancy, nor as they now exist,

When I am grown above them and can rule —
But in that middle stage when they were full
Yet ere I had disposed them to my will ;
And then I shall show how these elements
Produced my present state, and what it is.

I am made up of an intensest life,
Of a most clear idea of consciousness
Of self, distinct from all its qualities,
From all affections, passions, feelings, powers ;
And thus far it exists, if tracked, in all :
But linked, in me, to self-supremacy,
Existing as a centre to all things,
Most potent to create and rule and call
Upon all things to minister to it ;
And to a principle of restlessness
Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel, all —
This is myself ; and I should thus have been
Though gifted lower than the meanest soul.

And of my powers, one springs up to save
From utter death a soul with such desire
Confined to clay — of powers the only one
Which marks me — an imagination which
Has been a very angel, coming not
In fitful visions but beside me ever
And never failing me ; so, though my mind
Forgets not, not a shred of life forgets,
Yet I can take a secret pride in calling
The dark past up to quell it regally.

A mind like this must dissipate itself,
But I have always had one lode-star ; now,
As I look back, I see that I have halted

Or hastened as I looked towards that star —
A need, a trust, a yearning after God:
A feeling I have analyzed but late,
But it existed, and was reconciled
With a neglect of all I deemed his laws,
Which yet, when seen in others, I abhorred.
I felt as one beloved, and so shut in
From fear: and thence I date my trust in signs
And omens, for I saw God everywhere;
And I can only lay it to the fruit
Of a sad after-time that I could doubt
Even his being — e'en the while I felt
His presence, never acted from myself,
Still trusted in a hand to lead me through
All danger; and this feeling ever fought
Against my weakest reason and resolve.

And I can love nothing — and this dull truth
Has come the last: but sense supplies a love
Encircling me and mingling with my life.
These make myself: I have long sought in vain
To trace how they were formed by circumstance,
Yet ever found them mould my wildest youth
Where they alone displayed themselves, converted
All objects to their use: now see their course!

They came to me in my first dawn of life
Which passed alone with wisest ancient books
All halo-girt with fancies of my own;
And I myself went with the tale — a god
Wandering after beauty, or a giant
Standing vast in the sunset — an old hunter
Talking with gods, or a high-crested chief
Sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos.
I tell you, naught has ever been so clear

As the place, the time, the fashion of those lives:
I had not seen a work of lofty art,
Nor woman's beauty nor sweet nature's face,
Yet, I say, never morn broke clear as those
On the dim clustered isles in the blue sea,
The deep groves and white temples and wet caves:
And nothing ever will surprise me now —
Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed,
Who bound my forehead with Proserpine's hair.

And strange it is that I who could so dream
Should e'er have stooped to aim at aught beneath —
Aught low or painful; but I never doubted:
So, as I grew, I rudely shaped my life
To my immediate wants; yet strong beneath
Was a vague sense of power though folded up —
A sense that, though those shades and times were past,
Their spirit dwelt in me, with them should rule.

Then came a pause, and long restraint chained down
My soul till it was changed. I lost myself,
And were it not that I so loathe that loss,
I could recall how first I learned to turn
My mind against itself; and the effects
In deeds for which remorse were vain as for
The wanderings of delirious dream; yet thence
Came cunning, envy, falsehood, all world's wrong
That spotted me: at length I cleansed my soul.
Yet long world's influence remained; and naught
But the still life I led, apart once more,
Which left me free to seek soul's old delights,
Could e'er have brought me thus far back to peace.

As peace returned, I sought out some pursuit;
And song rose, no new impulse but the one

With which all others best could be combined.
My life has not been that of those whose heaven
Was lampless save where poesy shone out;
But as a clime where glittering mountain-tops
And glancing sea and forests steeped in light
Give back reflected the far-flashing sun;
For music (which is earnest of a heaven,
Seeing we know emotions strange by it,
Not else to be revealed,) is like a voice,
A low voice calling fancy, as a friend,
To the green woods in the gay summer time:
And she fills all the way with dancing shapes
Which have made painters pale, and they go on
Till stars look at them and winds call to them
As they leave life's path for the twilight world
Where the dead gather. This was not at first,
For I scarce knew what I would do. I had
An impulse but no yearning — only sang.

And first I sang as I in dream have seen
Music wait on a lyrist for some thought,
Yet singing to herself until it came.
I turned to those old times and scenes where all
That 's beautiful had birth for me, and made
Rude verses on them all; and then I paused —
I had done nothing, so I sought to know
What other minds achieved. No fear outbroke
As on the works of mighty bards I gazed,
In the first joy at finding my own thoughts
Recorded, my own fancies justified,
And their aspirings but my very own.
With them I first explored passion and mind, —
All to begin afresh! I rather sought
To rival what I wondered at than form

Creations of my own; if much was light
Lent by the object, much was yet my own.

I paused again: a change was coming — came:
I was no more a boy, the past was breaking
Before the future and her lover waked.
I thought on my new will, and all my powers
Burst out. I dreamed not of restraint, but gazed
On all things: whatever met my eyes went and came,
And I was proud, being variant of the weak)
In wandering o'er thought's world to seek some one
To be my prize, as if you wandered o'er
The White Way for a star.

And my choice fell
Not so much on a system as a man —
On one, whom praise of mine shall not offend,
Who was a calm at beauty, being such
Unto mankind as true to me, Pauline, —
Believing in them and devoting all
His soul's strength to their winning back to peace;
Who sent forth hopes and longings for their sake,
Cloaked in all passion's melodies: such first
Caught me and set me, slave of a sweet talk,
To disentangle, gather sense from song:
Since, song-interwoven, lurked there words which seemed
A key to a new world, the muttering
Of angels, something yet ungrasped by man.
How my heart leaps at still I sought and found
More there, I felt my own soul had conceived,
But more living and burning! Soon the orb
Of its conceptions dawned on me; its praise
Live in the tongues of men, men's brows are high
When its name means a triumph and a prize,

So, my weak voice may well forbear to shame
What seemed decreed my fate: I threw myself
To meet it, I was vowed to liberty,
Men were to be as gods and earth as heaven,
And I — ah, what a life was mine to prove!
My whole soul rose to meet it. Now, Pauline,
I shall go mad, if I recall that time!

Oh let me look back ere I leave forever
The time which was an hour one fondly waits
For a fair girl that comes a withered hag!
And I was lonely, far from woods and fields,
And amid dullest sights, who should be loose
As a stag; yet I was full of bliss, who lived
With Plato and who had the key to life;
And I had dimly shaped my first attempt,
And many a thought did I build up on thought,
As the wild bee hangs cell to cell; in vain,
For I must still advance, no rest for mind.

'T was in my plan to look on real life,
The life all new to me; my theories
Were firm, so them I left, to look and learn
Mankind, its cares, hopes, fears, its woes and joys;
And, as I pondered on their ways, I sought
How best life's end might be attained — an end
Comprising every joy. I deeply mused.

And suddenly without heart-wreck I awoke
As from a dream: I said "'T was beautiful,
Yet but a dream, and so adieu to it!"
As some world-wanderer sees in a far meadow
Strange towers and high-walled gardens thick with trees,
Where song takes shelter and delicious mirth
From laughing fairy creatures peeping over,

And on the morrow when he comes to lie
Forever 'neath those garden-trees fruit-flushed
Sung round by fairies, all his search is vain.
First went my hopes of perfecting mankind,
Next — faith in them, and then in freedom's self
And virtue's self, then my own motives, ends
And aims and loves, and human love went last.
I felt this no decay, because new powers
Rose as old feelings left — wit, mockery,
Light-heartedness; for I had oft been sad,
Mistrusting my resolves, but now I cast
Hope joyously away: I laughed and said
"No more of this!" I must not think: at length
I looked again to see if all went well.

My powers were greater: as some temple seemed
My soul, where naught is changed and incense rolls
Around the altar, only God is gone
And some dark spirit sitteth in his seat.
So, I passed through the temple and to me
Knelt troops of shadows, and they cried "Hail, king!
We serve thee now and thou shalt serve no more!
Call on us, prove us, let us worship thee!"
And I said "Are ye strong? Let fancy bear me
Far from the past!" And I was borne away,
As Arab birds float sleeping in the wind,
O'er deserts, towers and forests, I being calm.
And I said "I have nursed up energies,
They will prey on me." And a band knelt low
And cried "Lord, we are here and we will make
Safe way for thee in thine appointed life!
But look on us!" And I said "Ye will worship
Me; should my heart not worship too?" They
shouted

"Thyself, thou art our king!" So, I stood there
Smiling — oh, vanity of vanities!
For buoyant and rejoicing was the spirit
With which I looked out how to end my course;
I felt once more myself, my powers — all mine;
I knew while youth and health so lifted me
That, spite of all life's nothingness, no grief
Came nigh me, I must ever be light-hearted;
And that this knowledge was the only veil
Betwixt joy and despair: so, if age came,
I should be left — a wreck linked to a soul
Yet fluttering, or mind-broken and aware
Of my decay. So a long summer morn
Found me; and ere noon came, I had resolved
No age should come on me ere youth was spent,
For I would wear myself out, like that morn
Which wasted not a sunbeam; every hour
I would make mine, and die.

And thus I sought
To chain my spirit down which erst I freed
For flights to fame: I said "The troubled life
Of genius, seen so gay when working forth
Some trusted end, grows sad when all proves vain —
How sad when men have parted with truth's peace
For falsest fancy's sake, which waited first
As an obedient spirit when delight
Came without fancy's call but alters soon,
Comes darkened, seldom, hastens to depart,
Leaving a heavy darkness and warm tears.
But I shall never lose her; she will live
Dearer for such seclusion. I but catch
A hue, a glance of what I sing: so, pain
Is linked with pleasure, for I ne'er may tell

Half the bright sights which dazzle me ; but now
Mine shall be all the radiance : let them fade
Untold — others shall rise as fair, as fast!
And when all 's done, the few dim gleams transferred," —
(For a new thought sprang up how well it were,
Discarding shadowy hope, to weave such lays
As straight encircle men with praise and love,
So, I should not die utterly, — should bring
One branch from the gold forest, like the knight
Of old tales, witnessing I had been there) —
" And when all 's done, how vain seems e'en success —
The vaunted influence poets have o'er men !
'T is a fine thing that one weak as myself
Should sit in his lone room, knowing the words
He utters in his solitude shall move
Men like a swift wind — that tho' dead and gone,
New eyes shall glisten when his beauteous dreams
Of love come true in happier frames than his.
Ay, the still night brings thoughts like these, but morn
Comes and the mockery again laughs out
At hollow praises, smiles allied to sneers ;
And my soul's idol ever whispers me
To dwell with him and his unhonored song :
And I foreknow my spirit, that would press
First in the struggle, fail again to make
All bow enslaved, and I again should sink.

" And then know that this curse will come on us,
To see our idols perish ; we may wither,
No marvel, we are clay, but our low fate
Should not extend to those whom trustingly
We sent before into time's yawning gulf
To face what dread may lurk in darkness there.

To find the painter's glory pass, and feel
Music can move us not as once, or, worst,
To weep decaying wits ere the frail body
Decays! Naught makes me trust some love is true,
But the delight of the contented lowness
With which I gaze on him I keep forever
Above me; I to rise and rival him?
Feed his fame rather from my heart's best blood,
Wither unseen that he may flourish still."

Pauline, my soul's friend, thou dost pity yet
How this mood swayed me when that soul found thine,
When I had set myself to live this life,
Defying all past glory. Ere thou camest
I seemed defiant, sweet, for old delights
Had flocked like birds again; music, my life,
Nourished me more than ever; then the lore
Loved for itself and all it shows — that king
Treading the purple calmly to his death,
While round him, like the clouds of eve, all dusk,
The giant shades of fate, silently flitting,
Pile the dim outline of the coming doom;
And him sitting alone in blood while friends
Are hunting far in the sunshine; and the boy
With his white breast and brow and clustering curls
Streaked with his mother's blood, but striving hard
To tell his story ere his reason goes.
And when I loved thee as love seemed so oft,
Thou lovedst me indeed: I wondering searched
My heart to find some feeling like such love,
Believing I was still much I had been.
Too soon I found all faith had gone from me,
And the late glow of life, like change on clouds,
Proved not the morn-blush widening into day,

But eve faint-colored by the dying sun
While darkness hastens quickly. I will tell
My state as though 't were none of mine — despair
Cannot come near us — this it is, my state.

Souls alter not, and mine must still advance ;
Strange that I knew not, when I flung away
My youth's chief aims, their loss might lead to loss
Of what few I retained, and no resource
Be left me : for behold how changed is all !
I cannot chain my soul : it will not rest
In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere :
It has strange impulse, tendency, desire,
Which nowise I account for nor explain,
But cannot stifle, being bound to trust
All feelings equally, to hear all sides :
How can my life indulge them ? yet they live,
Referring to some state of life unknown.

My selfishness is satiated not,
It wears me like a flame ; my hunger for
All pleasure, howsoe'er minute, grows pain ;
I envy — how I envy him whose soul
Turns its whole energies to some one end,
To elevate an aim, pursue success
However mean ! So, my still baffled hope
Seeks out abstractions ; I would have one joy,
But one in life, so it were wholly mine,
One rapture all my soul could fill : and this
Wild feeling places me in dream afar
In some vast country where the eye can see
No end to the far hills and dales bestrewn
With shining towers and towns, till I grow mad
Well-nigh, to know not one abode but holds
Some pleasure, while my soul could grasp the world,

But must remain this vile form's slave. I look
With hope to age at last, which quenching much,
May let me concentrate what sparks it spares.

This restlessness of passion meets in me
A craving after knowledge: the sole proof
Of yet commanding will is in that power
Repressed; for I beheld it in its dawn,
The sleepless harpy with just-budding wings,
And I considered whether to forego
All happy ignorant hopes and fears, to live,
Finding a recompense in its wild eyes.
And when I found that I should perish so,
I bade its wild eyes close from me forever,
And I am left alone with old delights;
See! it lies in me a chained thing, still prompt
To serve me if I loose its slightest bond:
I cannot but be proud of my bright slave.

How should this earth's life prove my only sphere?
Can I so narrow sense but that in life
Soul still exceeds it? In their elements
My love outsoars my reason; but since love
Perforce receives its object from this earth
While reason wanders chainless, the few truths
Caught from its wanderings have sufficed to quell
Love chained below; then what were love, set free,
Which, with the object it demands, would pass
Reason companioning the seraphim?
No, what I feel may pass all human love
Yet fall far short of what my love should be.
And yet I seem more warped in this than aught,
Myself stands out more hideously: of old
I could forget myself in friendship, fame,

Liberty, nay, in love of mightier souls;
But I begin to know what thing hate is —
To sicken and to quiver and grow white —
And I myself have furnished its first prey.
Hate of the weak and ever-wavering will,
The selfishness, the still-decaying frame . . .
But I must never grieve whom wing can waft
Far from such thoughts — as now. Andromeda!
And she is with me: years roll, I shall change,
But change can touch her not — so beautiful
With her fixed eyes, earnest and still, and hair
Lifted and spread by the salt-sweeping breeze,
And one red beam, all the storm leaves in heaven,
Resting upon her eyes and hair, such hair,
As she awaits the snake on the wet beach
By the dark rock and the white wave just breaking
At her feet; quite naked and alone; a thing
I doubt not, nor fear for, secure some god
To save will come in thunder from the stars.
Let it pass! Soul requires another change.
I will be gifted with a wondrous mind,
Yet sunk by error to men's sympathy,
And in the wane of life, yet only so
As to call up their fears; and there shall come
A time requiring youth's best energies;
And lo, I fling age, sorrow, sickness off,
And rise triumphant, triumph through decay.

And thus it is that I supply the chasm
'Twixt what I am and all I fain would be:
But then to know nothing, to hope for nothing,
To seize on life's dull joys from a strange fear
Lest, losing them, all 's lost and naught remains!
There 's some vile juggle with my reason here;

I feel I but explain to my own loss
These impulses: they live no less the same.
Liberty! what though I despair? my blood
Rose never at a slave's name proud as now.
Oh sympathies, obscured by sophistries! —
Why else have I sought refuge in myself,
But from the woes I saw and could not stay?
Love! is not this to love thee, my Pauline?
I cherish prejudice, lest I be left
Utterly loveless? witness my belief
In poets, though sad change has come there too;
No more I leave myself to follow them —
Unconsciously I measure me by them —
Let me forget it: and I cherish most
My love of England — how her name, a word
Of hers in a strange tongue makes my heart beat!

Pauline, could I but break the spell! Not now —
All's fever — but when calm shall come again,
I am prepared: I have made life my own.
I would not be content with all the change
One frame should feel, but I have gone in thought
Thro' all conjuncture, I have lived all life
When it is most alive, where strangest fate
New-shapes it past surmise — the throes of men
Bit by some curse or in the grasps of doom
Half-visible and still-increasing round,
Or crowning their wide being's general aim.

These are wild fancies, but I feel, sweet friend,
As one breathing his weakness to the ear
Of pitying angel — dear as a winter flower,
A slight flower growing alone, and offering
Its frail cup of three leaves to the cold sun,

Yet joyous and confiding like the triumph
Of a child: and why am I not worthy thee?
I can live all the life of plants, and gaze
Drowsily on the bees that flit and play,
Or bare my breast for sunbeams which will kill,
Or open in the night of sounds, to look
For the dim stars; I can mount with the bird
Leaping airily his pyramid of leaves
And twisted boughs of some tall mountain tree,
Or rise cheerfully springing to the heavens;
Or like a fish breathe deep the morning air
In the misty sun-warm water; or with flower
And tree can smile in light at the sinking sun
Just as the storm comes, as a girl would look
On a departing lover — most serene.

Pauline, come with me, see how I could build
A home for us, out of the world, in thought!
I am uplifted: fly with me, Pauline!

Night, and one single ridge of narrow path
Between the sullen river and the woods
Waving and muttering, for the moonless night
Has shaped them into images of life,
Like the uprising of the giant-ghosts,
Looking on earth to know how their sons fare:
Thou art so close by me, the roughest swell
Of wind in the tree-tops hides not the panting
Of thy soft breasts. No, we will pass to morning —
Morning, the rocks and valleys and old woods.
How the sun brightens in the mist, and here,
Half in the air, like creatures of the place,
Trusting the element, living on high boughs
That swing in the wind — look at the silver spray
Flung from the foam-sheet of the cataract

Amid the broken rocks! Shall we stay here
With the wild hawks? No, ere the hot noon come,
Dive we down — safe! See this our new retreat
Walled in with a sloped mound of matted shrubs,
Dark, tangled, old and green, still sloping down
To a small pool whose waters lie asleep
Amid the trailing boughs turned water-plants:
And tall trees overarch to keep us in,
Breaking the sunbeams into emerald shafts,
And in the dreamy water one small group
Of two or three strange trees are got together
Wondering at all around, as strange beasts herd
Together far from their own land: all wildness,
No turf nor moss, for boughs and plants pave all,
And tongues of bank go shelving in the lymph,
Where the pale-throated snake reclines his head,
And old gray stones lie making eddies there,
The wild-mice cross them dry-shod. Deeper in!
Shut thy soft eyes — now look — still deeper in!
This is the very heart of the woods all round
Mountain-like heaped above us; yet even here
One pond of water gleams; far off the river
Sweeps like a sea, barred out from land; but one —
One thin clear sheet has overleaped and wound
Into this silent depth, which gained, it lies
Still, as but let by sufferance; the trees bend
O'er it as wild men watch a sleeping girl,
And through their roots long creeping plants out-stretch
Their twined hair, steeped and sparkling; farther on,
Tall rushes and thick flag-knots have combined
To narrow it; so, at length, a silver thread,
It winds, all noiselessly through the deep wood
Till thro' a cleft-way, thro' the moss and stone,
It joins its parent-river with a shout.

Up for the glowing day, leave the old woods!
See, they part like a ruined arch : the sky!
Nothing but sky appears, so close the roots
And grass of the hill-top level with the air —
Blue sunny air, where a great cloud floats laden
With light, like a dead whale that white birds pick,
Floating away in the sun in some north sea.
Air, air, fresh life-blood, thin and searching air,
The clear, dear breath of God that loveth us,
Where small birds reel and winds take their delight!
Water is beautiful, but not like air :
See, where the solid azure waters lie
Made as of thickened air, and down below,
The fern-ranks like a forest spread themselves
As though each pore could feel the element;
Where the quick glancing serpent winds his way,
Float with me there, Pauline! — but not like air.

Down the hill! Stop — a clump of trees, see, set
On a heap of rock, which look o'er the far plain :
So, envious climbing shrubs would mount to rest
And peer from their spread boughs; wide they wave, looking
At the muleteers who whistle on their way,
To the merry chime of morning bells, past all
The little smoking cots, mid fields and banks
And copses bright in the sun. My spirit wanders :
Hedgerows for me — those living hedgerows where
The bushes close and clasp above and keep
Thought in — I am concentrated — I feel;
But my soul saddens when it looks beyond :
I cannot be immortal, taste all joy.

O God, where do they tend — these struggling aims?
What would I have? What is this "sleep" which seems

To bound all? can there be a "waking" point
Of crowning life? The soul would never rule;
It would be first in all things, it would have
Its utmost pleasure filled, but, that complete,
Commanding, for commanding, sickens it.
The last point I can trace is — rest beneath
Some better essence than itself, in weakness;
This is "myself," not what I think should be:
And what is that I hunger for but God?

My God, my God, let me for once look on thee
As though naught else existed, we alone!
And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
Expands till I can say, — Even from myself
I need thee and I feel thee and I love thee.
I do not plead my rapture in thy works
For love of thee, nor that I feel as one
Who cannot die: but there is that in me
Which turns to thee, which loves or which should love.

Why have I girt myself with this hell-dress?
Why have I labored to put out my life?
Is it not in my nature to adore,
And e'en for all my reason do I not
Feel him, and thank him, and pray to him — now?
Can I forego the trust that he loves me?
Do I not feel a love which only ONE . . .
O thou pale form, so dimly seen, deep-eyed!
I have denied thee calmly — do I not
Pant when I read of thy consummate power,
And burn to see thy calm pure truths out-flash
The brightest gleams of earth's philosophy?
Do I not shake to hear aught question thee?

If I am erring save me, madden me,
Take from me powers and pleasures, let me die
Ages, so I see thee! I am knit round
As with a charm by sin and lust and pride,
Yet though my wandering dreams have seen all shapes
Of strange delight, oft have I stood by thee —
Have I been keeping lonely watch with thee
In the damp night by weeping Olivet,
Or leaning on thy bosom, proudly less,
Or dying with thee on the lonely cross,
Or witnessing thine outburst from the tomb.

A mortal, sin's familiar friend, doth here
Avow that he will give all earth's reward,
But to believe and humbly teach the faith,
In suffering and poverty and shame,
Only believing he is not unloved.

And now, my Pauline, I am thine forever!
I feel the spirit which has buoyed me up
Desert me, and old shades are gathering fast;
Yet while the last light waits, I would say much,
This chiefly, it is gain that I have said
Somewhat of love I ever felt for thee
But seldom told; our hearts so beat together
That speech seemed mockery; but when dark hours come,
And joy departs, and thou, sweet, deem'st it strange
A sorrow moves me, thou canst not remove,
Look on this lay I dedicate to thee,
Which through thee I began, which thus I end,
Collecting the last gleams to strive to tell
How I am thine, and more than ever now
That I sink fast: yet though I deeplier sink,

No less song proves one word has brought me bliss,
Another still may win bliss surely back.
Thou knowest, dear, I could not think all calm,
For fancies followed thought and bore me off,
And left all indistinct; ere one was caught
Another glanced; so, dazzled by my wealth,
I knew not which to leave nor which to choose,
For all so floated, naught was fixed and firm.
And then thou said'st a perfect bard was one
Who chronicled the stages of all life,
And so thou bad'st me shadow this first stage.
'T is done, and even now I recognize
The shift, the change from last to past — discern
Faintly how life is truth and truth is good.
And why thou must be mine is, that e'en now
In the dim hush of night, that I have done,
Despite the sad forebodings, love looks through —
Whispers, — E'en at the last I have her still,
With her delicious eyes as clear as heaven
When rain in a quick shower has beat down mist,
And clouds float white above like broods of swans.
How the blood lies upon her cheek, outspread
As thinned by kisses! only in her lips
It wells and pulses like a living thing,
And her neck looks like marble misted o'er
With love-breath, — a Pauline from heights above,
Stooping beneath me, looking up — one look
As I might kill her and be loved the more.
So, love me — me, Pauline, and naught but me,
Never leave loving! Words are wild and weak,
Believe them not, Pauline! I stained myself
But to behold thee purer by my side,
To show thou art my breath, my life, a last
Resource, an extreme want: never believe

Aught better could so look on thee; nor seek
Again the world of good thoughts left for mine!
There were bright troops of undiscovered suns,
Each equal in their radiant course; there were
Clusters of far fair isles which ocean kept
For his own joy, and his waves broke on them
Without a choice; and there was a dim crowd
Of visions, each a part of some grand whole:
And one star left his peers and came with peace
Upon a storm, and all eyes pined for him;
And one isle harbored a sea-beaten ship,
And the crew wandered in its bowers and plucked
Its fruits and gave up all their hopes of home;
And one dream came to a pale poet's sleep,
And he said, "I am singled out by God,
No sin must touch me." Words are wild and weak,
But what they would express is, — Leave me not,
Still sit by me with beating breast and hair
Loosened, be watching earnest by my side,
Turning my books or kissing me when I
Look up — like summer wind! Be still to me
A help to music's mystery which mind fails
To fathom, its solution, no mere clue!
O reason's pedantry, life's rule prescribed!
I hopeless, I the loveless, hope and love.
Wiser and better, know me now, not when
You loved me as I was. Smile not! I have
Much yet to dawn on you, to gladden you.
No more of the past! I'll look within no more.
I have too trusted my own lawless wants,
Too trusted my vain self, vague intuition —
Draining soul's wine alone in the still night,
And seeing how, as gathering films arose,
As by an inspiration life seemed bare

And grinning in its vanity, while ends
Foul to be dreamed of, smiled at me as fixed
And fair, while others changed from fair to foul
As a young witch turns an old hag at night.
No more of this! We will go hand in hand,
I with thee, even as a child — love's slave,
Looking no farther than his liege commands.

And thou hast chosen where this life shall be:
The land which gave me thee shall be our home,
Where nature lies all wild amid her lakes
And snow-swathed mountains and vast pines begirt
With ropes of snow — where nature lies all bare
Suffering none to view her but a race
Or stinted or deformed, like the mute dwarfs
Which wait upon a naked Indian queen.
And there (the time being when the heavens are thick
With storm) I 'll sit with thee while thou dost sing
Thy native songs, gay as a desert bird
Which crieth as it flies for perfect joy,
Or telling me old stories of dead knights;
Or I will read great lays to thee — how she,
The fair pale sister, went to her chill grave
With power to love and to be loved and live:
Or we will go together, like twin gods
Of the infernal world, with scented lamp
Over the dead, to call and to awake,
Over the unshaped images which lie
Within my mind's cave: only leaving all,
That tells of the past doubt. So, when spring comes
With sunshine back again like an old smile,
And the fresh waters and awakened birds
And budding woods await us, I shall be
Prepared, and we will question life once more,

Till its old sense shall come renewed by change,
Like some clear thought which harsh words veiled before;
Feeling God loves us, and that all which errs
Is but a dream which death will dissipate.
And then what need of longer exile? Seek
My England, and, again there, calm approach
All I once fled from, calmly look on those
The works of my past weakness, as one views
Some scene where danger met him long before.
Ah that such pleasant life should be but dreamed!

But whate'er come of it, and though it fade,
And though ere the cold morning all be gone,
As it may be; — tho' music wait to wile,
And strange eyes and bright wine lure, laugh like sin
Which steals back softly on a soul half saved,
And I the first deny, decry, despise,
With this avowal, these intents so fair, —
Still be it all my own, this moment's pride!
No less I make an end in perfect joy.
E'en in my brightest time, a lurking fear
Possessed me: I well knew my weak resolves,
I felt the witchery that makes mind sleep
Over its treasure, as one half afraid
To make his riches definite: but now
These feelings shall not utterly be lost,
I shall not know again that nameless care
Lest, leaving all undone in youth, some new
And undreamed end reveal itself too late:
For this song shall remain to tell forever
That when I lost all hope of such a change,
Suddenly beauty rose on me again.
No less I make an end in perfect joy,

For I, who thus again was visited,
Shall doubt not many another bliss awaits,
And, though this weak soul sink and darkness whelm,
Some little word shall light it, raise aloft,
To where I clearlier see and better love,
As I again go o'er the tracts of thought
Like one who has a right, and I shall live
With poets, calmer, purer still each time,
And beauteous shapes will come for me to seize,
And unknown secrets will be trusted me
Which were denied the waverer once; but now
I shall be priest and prophet as of old.

Sun-treader, I believe in God and truth
And love; and as one just escaped from death
Would bind himself in bands of friends to feel
He lives indeed, so, I would lean on thee!
Thou must be ever with me, most in gloom
If such must come, but chiefly when I die,
For I seem, dying, as one going in the dark
To fight a giant: but live thou forever,
And be to all what thou hast been to me!
All in whom this wakes pleasant thoughts of me
Know my last state is happy, free from doubt
Or touch of fear. Love me and wish me well.

RICHMOND: *October* 22, 1832.

[*Note on passage beginning with line* 822.]

Je crains bien que mon pauvre ami ne soit pas toujours parfaitement compris dans ce qui reste à lire de cet étrange fragment, mais il est moins propre que tout autre à éclaircir ce qui de sa nature ne peut jamais être que songe et confusion. D'ailleurs je ne sais trop si en

cherchant à mieux co-ordonner certaines parties l'on ne courrait pas le risque de nuire au seul mérite auquel une production si singulière peut prétendre, celui de donner une idée assez précise du genre qu'elle n'a fait qu'ébaucher. Ce début sans prétention, ce remuement des passions qui va d'abord en accroissant et puis s'apaise par degrés, ces élans de l'âme, ce retour soudain sur soi-même, et par-dessus tout, la tournure d'esprit tout particulière de mon ami, rendent les changemens presque impossibles. Les raisons qu'il fait valoir ailleurs, et d'autres encore plus puissantes, ont fait trouver grâce à mes yeux pour cet écrit qu'autrement je lui eusse conseillé de jeter au feu. Je n'en crois pas moins au grand principe de toute composition — à ce principe de Shakespeare, de Rafaelle, de Beethoven, d'où il suit que la concentration des idées est due bien plus á leur conception qu'à leur mise en exécution : j'ai tout lieu de craindre que la première de ces qualités ne soit encore étrangère à mon ami, et je doute fort qu'un redoublement de travail lui fasse acquérir la seconde. Le mieux serait de brûler ceci ; mais que faire ?

Je crois que dans ce qui suit il fait allusion à un certain examen qu'il fit autrefois de l'âme, ou plutôt de son âme, pour découvrir la suite des objets auxquels il lui serait possible d'atteindre, et dont chacun une fois obtenu devait former une espèce de plateau d'où l'on pouvait apercevoir d'autres buts, d'autres projets, d'autres jouissances qui, à leur tour, devaient être surmontés. Il en résultait que l'oubli et le sommeil devaient tout terminer. Cette idée, que je ne saisis pas parfaitement, lui est peut-être aussi inintelligible qu'à moi.

PAULINE.

PARACELSUS.

1835.

INSCRIBED TO

AMÉDÉE DE RIPERT-MONCLAR

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

R. B

LONDON: *March* 15, 1835.

PERSONS.

AUREOLUS PARACELSUS, *a student.*
FESTUS *and* MICHAL, *his friends.*
APRILE, *an Italian poet.*

I.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES.

SCENE. — *Würzburg; a garden in the environs.*
1512.

FESTUS, PARACELSUS, MICHAL.

Paracelsus. Come close to me, dear friends; still closer; thus!
Close to the heart which, though long time roll by
Ere it again beat quicker, pressed to yours,
As now it beats — perchance a long, long time —
At least henceforth your memories shall make
Quiet and fragrant as befits their home.
Nor shall my memory want a home in yours —
Alas, that it requires too well such free
Forgiving love as shall embalm it there!
For if you would remember me aright,

As I was born to be, you must forget
All fitful strange and moody waywardness
Which e'er confused my better spirit, to dwell
Only on moments such as these, dear friends!
— My heart no truer, but my words and ways
More true to it: as Michal, some months hence,
Will say, "this autumn was a pleasant time,"
For some few sunny days; and overlook
Its bleak wind, hankering after pining leaves.
Autumn would fain be sunny; I would look
Liker my nature's truth: and both are frail,
And both beloved, for all our frailty.

Michal. Aureole!

Paracelsus. Drop by drop! she is weeping like a child!
Not so! I am content — more than content;
Nay, autumn wins you best by this its mute
Appeal to sympathy for its decay:
Look up, sweet Michal, nor esteem the less
Your stained and drooping vines their grapes bow down,
Nor blame those creaking trees bent with their fruit,
That apple-tree with a rare after-birth
Of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth among!
Then for the winds — what wind that ever raved
Shall vex that ash which overlooks you both,
So proud it wears its berries? Ah, at length,
The old smile meet for her, the lady of this
Sequestered nest! — this kingdom, limited
Alone by one old populous green wall
Tenanted by the ever-busy flies,
Gray crickets and shy lizards and quick spiders,
Each family of the silver-threaded moss —
Which, look through near, this way, and it appears

A stubble-field or a cane-brake, a marsh
Of bulrush whitening in the sun : laugh now !
Fancy the crickets, each one in his house,
Looking out, wondering at the world — or best,
Yon painted snail with his gay shell of dew,
Travelling to see the glossy balls high up
Hung by the caterpillar, like gold lamps.
Michal. In truth we have lived carelessly and well.
Paracelsus. And shall, my perfect pair ! — each, trust me, born
For the other ; nay, your very hair, when mixed,
Is of one hue. For where save in this nook
Shall you two walk, when I am far away,
And wish me prosperous fortune ? Stay : that plant
Shall never wave its tangles lightly and softly,
As a queen's languid and imperial arm
Which scatters crowns among her lovers, but you
Shall be reminded to predict to me
Some great success ! Ah see, the sun sinks broad
Behind Saint Saviour's : wholly gone, at last !
Festus. Now, Aureole, stay those wandering eyes awhile !
You are ours to-night, at least ; and while you spoke
Of Michal and her tears, I thought that none
Could willing leave what he so seemed to love :
But that last look destroys my dream — that look
As if, where'er you gazed, there stood a star !
How far was Würzburg with its church and spire
And garden-walls and all things they contain,
From that look's far alighting ?
Paracelsus. I but spoke
And looked alike from simple joy to see
The beings I love best, shut in so well
From all rude chances like to be my lot.

That, when afar, my weary spirit, — disposed
To lose awhile its care in soothing thoughts
Of them, their pleasant features, looks and words, —
Needs never hesitate, nor apprehend
Encroaching trouble may have reached them too,
Nor have recourse to fancy's busy aid
And fashion even a wish in their behalf
Beyond what they possess already here ;
But, unobstructed, may at once forget
Itself in them, assured how well they fare.
Beside, this Festus knows he holds me one
Whom quiet and its charms arrest in vain,
One scarce aware of all the joys I quit,
Too filled with airy hopes to make account
Of soft delights his own heart garners up :
Whereas behold how much our sense of all
That 's beauteous proves alike ! When Festus learns
That every common pleasure of the world
Affects me as himself ; that I have just
As varied appetite for joy derived
From common things ; a stake in life, in short,
Like his ; a stake which rash pursuit of aims
That life affords not, would as soon destroy ; —
He may convince himself that, this in view,
I shall act well advised. And last, because,
Though heaven and earth and all things were at stake,
Sweet Michal must not weep, our parting eve.

Festus. True : and the eve is deepening, and we sit
As little anxious to begin our talk
As though to-morrow I could hint of it
As we paced arm-in-arm the cheerful town
At sun-dawn ; or could whisper it by fits
(Trithemius busied with his class the while)

In that dim chamber where the noon-streaks peer
Half-frightened by the awful tomes around;
Or in some grassy lane unbosom all
From even-blush to midnight: but, to-morrow!
Have I full leave to tell my inmost mind?
We have been brothers, and henceforth the world
Will rise between us: — all my freest mind?
'T is the last night, dear Aureole!
Paracelsus. Oh, say on!
Devise some test of love, some arduous feat
To be performed for you: say on! If night
Be spent the while, the better! Recall how oft
My wondrous plans and dreams and hopes and fears
Have — never wearied you, oh no! — as I
Recall, and never vividly as now,
Your true affection, born when Einsiedeln
And its green hills were all the world to us;
And still increasing to this night which ends
My further stay at Würzburg. Oh, one day
You shall be very proud! Say on, dear friends!
Festus. In truth? 'T is for my proper peace, indeed,
Rather than yours; for vain all projects seem
To stay your course: I said my latest hope
Is fading even now. A story tells
Of some far embassy despatched to win
The favor of an eastern king, and how
The gifts they offered proved but dazzling dust
Shed from the ore-beds native to his clime.
Just so, the value of repose and love,
I meant should tempt you, better far than I
You seem to comprehend; and yet desist
No whit from projects where repose nor love
Has part.

Paracelsus. Once more? Alas! As I foretold.
Festus. A solitary brier the bank puts forth
To save our swan's nest floating out to sea.
Paracelsus. Dear Festus, hear me. What is it you wish?
That I should lay aside my heart's pursuit,
Abandon the sole ends for which I live,
Reject God's great commission, and so die!
You bid me listen for your true love's sake:
Yet how has grown that love? Even in a long
And patient cherishing of the self-same spirit
It now would quell; as though a mother hoped
To stay the lusty manhood of the child
Once weak upon her knees. I was not born
Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank
From aught which marked me out apart from men:
I would have lived their life, and died their death,
Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny:
But you first guided me through doubt and fear,
Taught me to know mankind and know myself;
And now that I am strong and full of hope,
That, from my soul, I can reject all aims
Save those your earnest words made plain to me,
Now that I touch the brink of my design,
When I would have a triumph in their eyes,
A glad cheer in their voices — Michal weeps,
And Festus ponders gravely!
Festus. When you deign
To hear my purpose . . .
Paracelsus. Hear it? I can say
Beforehand all this evening's conference!
'T is this way, Michal, that he uses: first,
Or he declares, or I, the leading points
Of our best scheme of life, what is man's end

And what God's will; no two faiths e'er agreed
As his with mine. Next, each of us allows
Faith should be acted on as best we may;
Accordingly, I venture to submit
My plan, in lack of better, for pursuing
The path which God's will seems to authorize.
Well, he discerns much good in it, avows
This motive worthy, that hope plausible,
A danger here to be avoided, there
An oversight to be repaired: in fine
Our two minds go together — all the good
Approved by him, I gladly recognize,
All he counts bad, I thankfully discard,
And naught forbids my looking up at last
For some stray comfort in his cautious brow.
When, lo! I learn that, spite of all, there lurks
Some innate and inexplicable germ
Of failure in my scheme; so that at last
It all amounts to this — the sovereign proof
That we devote ourselves to God, is seen
In living just as though no God there were;
A life which, prompted by the sad and blind
Folly of man, Festus abhors the most;
But which these tenets sanctify at once,
Though to less subtle wits it seems the same,
Consider it how they may.

Michal. Is it so, Festus?
He speaks so calmly and kindly: is it so?

Paracelsus. Reject those glorious visions of God's love
And man's design; laugh loud that God should send
Vast longings to direct us; say how soon
Power satiates these, or lust, or gold; I know
The world's cry well, and how to answer it.
But this ambiguous warfare . . .

Festus. . . . Wearies so
That you will grant no last leave to your friend
To urge it? — for his sake, not yours? I wish
To send my soul in good hopes after you;
Never to sorrow that uncertain words
Erringly apprehended, a new creed
Ill understood, begot rash trust in you,
Had share in your undoing.
Paracelsus. Choose your side,
Hold or renounce: but meanwhile blame me not
Because I dare to act on your own views,
Nor shrink when they point onward, nor espy
A peril where they most insure success.
Festus. Prove that to me — but that! Prove you abide
Within their warrant, nor presumptuous boast
God's labor laid on you; prove, all you covet
A mortal may expect; and, most of all,
Prove the strange course you now affect, will lead
To its attainment — and I bid you speed,
Nay, count the minutes till you venture forth!
You smile; but I had gathered from slow thought —
Much musing on the fortunes of my friend —
Matter I deemed could not be urged in vain;
But it all leaves me at my need: in shreds
And fragments I must venture what remains.
Michal. Ask at once, Festus, wherefore he should scorn . . .
Festus. Stay, Michal: Aureole, I speak guardedly
And gravely, knowing well, whate'er your error,
This is no ill-considered choice of yours,
No sudden fancy of an ardent boy.
Not from your own confiding words alone
Am I aware your passionate heart long since

Gave birth to, nourished and at length matures
This scheme. I will not speak of Einsiedeln,
Where I was born your elder by some years
Only to watch you fully from the first:
In all beside, our mutual tasks were fixed
Even then — 't was mine to have you in my view
As you had your own soul and those intents
Which filled it when, to crown your dearest wish,
With a tumultuous heart, you left with me
Our childhood's home to join the favored few
Whom, here, Trithemius condescends to teach
A portion of his lore: and not one youth
Of those so favored, whom you now despise,
Came earnest as you came, resolved, like you,
To grasp all, and retain all, and deserve
By patient toil a wide renown like his.
Now, this new ardor which supplants the old
I watched, too; 't was significant and strange,
In one matched to his soul's content at length
With rivals in the search for wisdom's prize,
To see the sudden pause, the total change;
From contest, the transition to repose —
From pressing onward as his fellows pressed,
To a blank idleness, yet most unlike
The dull stagnation of a soul, content,
Once foiled, to leave betimes a thriveless quest.
That careless bearing, free from all pretence
Even of contempt for what it ceased to seek —
Smiling humility, praising much, yet waiving
What it professed to praise — though not so well
Maintained but that rare outbreaks, fierce and brief,
Revealed the hidden scorn, as quickly curbed.
That ostentatious show of past defeat,
That ready acquiescence in contempt,

I deemed no other than the letting go
His shivered sword, of one about to spring
Upon his foe's throat; but it was not thus:
Not that way looked your brooding purpose then.
For after-signs disclosed, what you confirmed,
That you prepared to task to the uttermost
Your strength, in furtherance of a certain aim
Which — while it bore the name your rivals gave
Their own most puny efforts — was so vast
In scope that it included their best flights,
Combined them, and desired to gain one prize
In place of many, — the secret of the world,
Of man, and man's true purpose, path and fate.
— That you, not nursing as a mere vague dream
This purpose, with the sages of the past,
Have struck upon a way to this, if all
You trust be true, which following, heart and soul,
You, if a man may, dare aspire to KNOW:
And that this aim shall differ from a host
Of aims alike in character and kind,
Mostly in this, — that in itself alone
Shall its reward be, not an alien end
Blending therewith; no hope nor fear nor joy
Nor woe, to elsewhere move you, but this pure
Devotion to sustain you or betray:
Thus you aspire.

Paracelsus. You shall not state it thus:
I should not differ from the dreamy crew
You speak of. I profess no other share
In the selection of my lot, than this
My ready answer to the will of God
Who summons me to be his organ. All
Whose innate strength supports them shall succeed
No better than the sages.

Festus. Such the aim, then,
God sets before you; and 't is doubtless need
That he appoint no less the way of praise
Than the desire to praise; for, though I hold
With you, the setting forth such praise to be
The natural end and service of a man,
And hold such praise is best attained when man
Attains the general welfare of his kind —
Yet this, the end, is not the instrument.
Presume not to serve God apart from such
Appointed channel as he wills shall gather
Imperfect tributes, for that sole obedience
Valued perchance! He seeks not that his altars
Blaze, careless how, so that they do but blaze.
Suppose this, then; that God selected you
To KNOW (heed well your answers, for my faith
Shall meet implicitly what they affirm)
I cannot think you dare annex to such
Selection aught beyond a steadfast will,
An intense hope; nor let your gifts create
Scorn or neglect of ordinary means
Conducive to success, make destiny
Dispense with man's endeavor. Now, dare you search
Your inmost heart, and candidly avow
Whether you have not rather wild desire
For this distinction than security
Of its existence? whether you discern
The path to the fulfilment of your purpose
Clear as that purpose — and again, that purpose
Clear as your yearning to be singled out
For its pursuer. Dare you answer this?

Paracelsus [*after a pause*]. No, I have naught to fear! Who will may know

The secret'st workings of my soul. What though
It be so? — if indeed the strong desire
Eclipse the aim in me? — if splendor break
Upon the outset of my path alone,
And duskest shade succeed? What fairer seal
Shall I require to my authentic mission
Than this fierce energy? — this instinct striving
Because its nature is to strive? — enticed
By the security of no broad course,
Without success forever in its eyes!
How know I else such glorious fate my own,
But in the restless irresistible force
That works within me? Is it for human will
To institute such impulses? — still less,
To disregard their promptings! What should I
Do, kept among you all; your loves, your cares,
Your life — all to be mine? Be sure that God
Ne'er dooms to waste the strength he deigns impart!
Ask the geier-eagle why she stoops at once
Into the vast and unexplored abyss,
What full-grown power informs her from the first,
Why she not marvels, strenuously beating
The silent boundless regions of the sky!
Be sure they sleep not whom God needs! Nor fear
Their holding light his charge, when every hour
That finds that charge delayed, is a new death.
This for the faith in which I trust; and hence
I can abjure so well the idle arts
These pedants strive to learn and teach; Black Arts,
Great Works, the Secret and Sublime, forsooth —
Let others prize: too intimate a tie
Connects me with our God! A sullen fiend
To do my bidding, fallen and hateful sprites
To help me — what are these, at best, beside

God helping, God directing everywhere,
So that the earth shall yield her secrets up,
And every object there be charged to strike,
Teach, gratify her master God appoints?
And I am young, my Festus, happy and free!
I can devote myself; I have a life
To give; I, singled out for this, the One!
Think, think! the wide East, where all Wisdom sprung;
The bright South, where she dwelt; the hopeful North,
All are passed o'er — it lights on me! 'T is time
New hopes should animate the world, new light
Should dawn from new revealings to a race
Weighed down so 'ong, forgotten so long; thus shall
The heaven reserved for us at last receive
Creatures whom no unwonted splendors blind,
But ardent to confront the unclouded blaze
Whose beams not seldom blessed their pilgrimage,
Not seldom glorified their life below.

Festus. My words have their old fate and make faint stand
Against your glowing periods. Call this, truth —
Why not pursue it in a fast retreat,
Some one of Learning's many palaces,
After approved example? — seeking there
Calm converse with the great dead, soul to soul,
Who laid up treasure with the like intent
— So lift yourself into their airy place,
And fill out full their unfulfilled careers,
Unravelling the knots their baffled skill
Pronounced inextricable, true! — but left
Far less confused. A fresh eye, a fresh hand,
Might do much at their vigor's waning-point;

Succeeding with new-breathed new-hearted force,
As at old games the runner snatched the torch
From runner still: this way success might be.
But you have coupled with your enterprise,
An arbitrary self-repugnant scheme
Of seeking it in strange and untried paths.
What books are in the desert? Writes the sea
The secret of her yearning in vast caves
Where yours will fall the first of human feet?
Has wisdom sat there and recorded aught
You press to read? Why turn aside from her
To visit, where her vesture never glanced,
Now — solitudes consigned to barrenness
By God's decree, which who shall dare impugn?
Now — ruins where she paused but would not stay,
Old ravaged cities that, renouncing her,
She called an endless curse on, so it came:
Or worst of all, now — men you visit, men,
Ignoblest troops who never heard her voice
Or hate it, men without one gift from Rome
Or Athens, — these shall Aureole's teachers be!
Rejecting past example, practice, precept,
Aidless 'mid these he thinks to stand alone:
Thick like a glory round the Stagirite
Your rivals throng, the sages: here stand you!
Whatever you may protest, knowledge is not
Paramount in your love; or for her sake
You would collect all help from every source —
Rival, assistant, friend, foe, all would merge
In the broad class of those who showed her haunts,
And those who showed them not.

Paracelsus. What shall I say?
Festus, from childhood I have been possessed
By a fire — by a true fire, or faint or fierce.

As from without some master, so it seemed,
Repressed or urged its current: this but ill
Expresses what I would convey: but rather
I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,
So became manifest. I knew not then
What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
Were laid away in some great trance — the ages
Coming and going all the while — till dawned
His true time's advent; and could then record
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed, —
Then I might tell more of the breath so light
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers light
Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep.
And having this within me and about me
While Einsiedeln, its mountains, lakes and woods
Confined me — what oppressive joy was mine
When life grew plain, and I first viewed the thronged,
The everlasting concourse of mankind!
Believe that ere I joined them, ere I knew
The purpose of the pageant, or the place
Consigned me in its ranks — while, just awake,
Wonder was freshest and delight most pure —
'T was then that least supportable appeared
A station with the brightest of the crowd,
A portion with the proudest of them all.
And from the tumult in my breast, this only
Could I collect, that I must thenceforth die
Or elevate myself far, far above
The gorgeous spectacle. I seemed to long

At once to trample on, yet save mankind,
To make some unexampled sacrifice
In their behalf, to wring some wondrous good
From heaven or earth for them, to perish, winning
Eternal weal in the act: as who should dare
Pluck out the angry thunder from its cloud,
That, all its gathered flame discharged on him,
No storm might threaten summer's azure sleep:
Yet never to be mixed with men so much
As to have part even in my own work, share
In my own largess. Once the feat achieved,
I would withdraw from their officious praise,
Would gently put aside their profuse thanks.
Like some knight traversing a wilderness,
Who, on his way, may chance to free a tribe
Of desert-people from their dragon-foe;
When all the swarthy race press round to kiss
His feet, and choose him for their king, and yield
Their poor tents, pitched among the sandhills, for
His realm: and he points, smiling, to his scarf
Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet
Gay set with twinkling stones — and to the East,
Where these must be displayed!

Festus. Good: let us hear
No more about your nature, "which first shrank
From all that marked you out apart from men!"

Paracelsus. I touch on that; these words but analyze
The first mad impulse: 't was as brief as fond,
For as I gazed again upon the show,
I soon distinguished here and there a shape
Palm-wreathed and radiant, forehead and full eye.
Well pleased was I their state should thus at once
Interpret my own thoughts: — "Behold the clue

To all," I rashly said, "and what I pine
To do, these have accomplished: we are peers.
They know and therefore rule: I, too, will know!"
You were beside me, Festus, as you say;
You saw me plunge in their pursuits whom fame
Is lavish to attest the lords of mind,
Not pausing to make sure the prize in view
Would satiate my cravings when obtained,
But since they strove I strove. Then came a slow
And strangling failure. We aspired alike,
Yet not the meanest plodder, Tritheim counts
A marvel, but was all-sufficient, strong,
Or staggered only at his own vast wits;
While I was restless, nothing satisfied,
Distrustful, most perplexed. I would slur over
That struggle; suffice it, that I loathed myself
As weak compared with them, yet felt somehow
A mighty power was brooding, taking shape
Within me; and this lasted till one night
When, as I sat revolving it and more,
A still voice from without said — "Seest thou not,
Desponding child, whence spring defeat and loss?
Even from thy strength. Consider: hast thou gazed
Presumptuously on wisdom's countenance,
No veil between; and can thy faltering hands,
Unguided by the brain the sight absorbs,
Pursue their task as earnest blinkers do
Whom radiance ne'er distracted? Live their life
If thou wouldst share their fortune, choose their eyes
Unfed by splendor. Let each task present
Its petty good to thee. Waste not thy gifts
In profitless waiting for the gods' descent,
But have some idol of thine own to dress
With their array. Know, not for knowing's sake,

But to become a star to men forever;
Know, for the gain it gets, the praise it brings,
The wonder it inspires, the love it breeds:
Look one step onward, and secure that step!"
And I smiled as one never smiles but once,
Then first discovering my own aim's extent,
Which sought to comprehend the works of God,
And God himself, and all God's intercourse
With the human mind; I understood, no less,
My fellows' studies, whose true worth I saw,
But smiled not, well aware who stood by me.
And softer came the voice — "There is a way:
'T is hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued
With frailty — hopeless, if indulgence first
Have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength:
Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man's,
Apart from all reward?" And last it breathed —
"Be happy, my good soldier; I am by thee,
Be sure, even to the end!" — I answered not,
Knowing him. As he spoke, I was endued
With comprehension and a steadfast will;
And when he ceased, my brow was sealed his own.
If there took place no special change in me,
How comes it all things wore a different hue
Thenceforward? — pregnant with vast consequence,
Teeming with grand result, loaded with fate?
So that when, quailing at the mighty range
Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I haste
To contemplate undazzled some one truth,
Its bearings and effects alone — at once
What was a speck expands into a star,
Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
Till I near craze. I go to prove my soul!
I see my way as birds their trackless way.

I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
I ask not: but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time!
Michal. Vex him no further, Festus; it is so!
Festus. Just thus you help me ever. This would hold
Were it the trackless air, and not a path
Inviting you, distinct with footprints yet
Of many a mighty marcher gone that way.
You may have purer views than theirs, perhaps,
But they were famous in their day — the proofs
Remain. At least accept the light they lend.
Paracelsus. Their light! the sum of all is briefly this:
They labored and grew famous, and the fruits
Are best seen in a dark and groaning earth
Given over to a blind and endless strife
With evils, what of all their lore abates?
No; I reject and spurn them utterly
And all they teach. Shall I still sit beside
Their dry wells, with a white lip and filmed eye,
While in the distance heaven is blue above
Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns?
Festus. And yet
As strong delusions have prevailed ere now.
Men have set out as gallantly to seek
Their ruin. I have heard of such: yourself
Avow all hitherto have failed and fallen.
Michal. Nay, Festus, when but as the pilgrims faint
Through the drear way, do you expect to see
Their city dawn amid the clouds afar?
Paracelsus. Ay, sounds it not like some old well-known tale?

For me, I estimate their works and them
So rightly, that at times I almost dream
I too have spent a life the sages' way,
And tread once more familiar paths. Perchance
I perished in an arrogant self-reliance
Ages ago; and in that act, a prayer
For one more chance went up so earnest, so
Instinct with better light let in by death,
That life was blotted out — not so completely
But scattered wrecks enough of it remain,
Dim memories, as now, when once more seems
The goal in sight again. All which, indeed,
Is foolish, and only means — the flesh I wear,
The earth I tread, are not more clear to me
Than my belief, explained to you or no.
Festus. And who am I, to challenge and dispute
That clear belief? I will divest all fear.
Michal. Then Aureole is God's commissary! he shall
Be great and grand — and all for us!
Paracelsus. No, sweet!
Not great and grand. If I can serve mankind
'T is well; but there our intercourse must end:
I never will be served by those I serve.
Festus. Look well to this; here is a plague-spot, here,
Disguise it how you may! 'T is true, you utter
This scorn while by our side and loving us;
'T is but a spot as yet: but it will break
Into a hideous blotch if overlooked.
How can that course be safe which from the first
Produces carelessness to human love?
It seems you have abjured the helps which men
Who overpass their kind, as you would do,

Have humbly sought; I dare not thoroughly probe
This matter, lest I learn too much. Let be
That popular praise would little instigate
Your efforts, nor particular approval
Reward you; put reward aside; alone
You shall go forth upon your arduous task,
None shall assist you, none partake your toil,
None share your triumph: still you must retain
Some one to cast your glory on, to share
Your rapture with. Were I elect like you,
I would encircle me with love, and raise
A rampart of my fellows; it should seem
Impossible for me to fail, so watched
By gentle friends who made my cause their own.
They should ward off fate's envy — the great gift,
Extravagant when claimed by me alone,
Being so a gift to them as well as me.
If danger daunted me or ease seduced,
How calmly their sad eyes should gaze reproach!
Michal. O Aureole, can I sing when all alone,
Without first calling, in my fancy, both
To listen by my side — even I! And you?
Do you not feel this? Say that you feel this!
Paracelsus. I feel 't is pleasant that my aims, at length
Allowed their weight, should be supposed to need
A further strengthening in these goodly helps!
My course allures for its own sake, its sole
Intrinsic worth; and ne'er shall boat of mine
Adventure forth for gold and apes at once.
Your sages say, "if human, therefore weak:"
If weak, more need to give myself entire
To my pursuit; and by its side, all else . . .
No matter! I deny myself but little

In waiving all assistance save its own.
Would there were some real sacrifice to make!
Your friends the sages threw their joys away,
While I must be content with keeping mine.
Festus. But do not cut yourself from human weal!
You cannot thrive — a man that dares affect
To spend his life in service to his kind
For no reward of theirs, unbound to them
By any tie; nor do so, Aureole! No —
There are strange punishments for such. Give up
(Although no visible good flow thence) some part
Of the glory to another; hiding thus,
Even from yourself, that all is for yourself.
Say, say almost to God — "I have done all
For her, not for myself!"
Paracelsus. And who but lately
Was to rejoice in my success like you?
Whom should I love but both of you?
Festus. I know not:
But know this, you, that 't is no will of mine
You should abjure the lofty claims you make;
And this the cause — I can no longer seek
To overlook the truth, that there would be
A monstrous spectacle upon the earth,
Beneath the pleasant sun, among the trees:
— A being knowing not what love is. Hear me!
You are endowed with faculties which bear
Annexed to them as 't were a dispensation
To summon meaner spirits to do their will
And gather round them at their need; inspiring
Such with a love themselves can never feel,
Passionless 'mid their passionate votaries.
I know not if you joy in this or no,
Or ever dream that common men can live

On objects you prize lightly, but which make
Their heart's sole treasure: the affections seem
Beauteous at most to you, which we must taste
Or die: and this strange quality accords,
I know not how, with you; sits well upon
That luminous brow, though in another it scowls
An eating brand, a shame. I dare not judge you.
The rules of right and wrong thus set aside,
There 's no alternative — I own you one
Of higher order, under other laws
Than bind us; therefore, curb not one bold glance!
'T is best aspire. Once mingled with us all . . .
Michal. Stay with us, Aureole! cast those hopes away,
And stay with us! An angel warns me, too,
Man should be humble; you are very proud:
And God, dethroned, has doleful plagues for such!
— Warns me to have in dread no quick repulse,
No slow defeat, but a complete success:
You will find all you seek, and perish so!
Paracelsus [*after a pause*]. Are these the barren firstfruits of my quest?
Is love like this the natural lot of all?
How many years of pain might one such hour
O'erbalance? Dearest Michal, dearest Festus,
What shall I say, if not that I desire
To justify your love; and will, dear friends,
In swerving nothing from my first resolves.
See, the great moon! and ere the mottled owls
Were wide awake, I was to go. It seems
You acquiesce at last in all save this —
If I am like to compass what I seek
By the untried career I choose; and then,
If that career, making but small account

Of much of life's delight, will yet retain
Sufficient to sustain my soul: for thus
I understand these fond fears just expressed.
And first; the lore you praise and I neglect,
The labors and the precepts of old time,
I have not lightly disesteemed. But, friends,
Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception — which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error: and to KNOW
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly
The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
And you trace back the effluence to its spring
And source within us; where broods radiance vast,
To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
Shall favor: chance — for hitherto, your sage
Even as he knows not how those beams are born,
As little knows he what unlocks their fount:
And men have oft grown old among their books
To die case-hardened in their ignorance,
Whose careless youth had promised what long years
Of unremitted labor ne'er performed:
While, contrary, it has chanced some idle day,
To autumn loiterers just as fancy-free
As the midges in the sun, gives birth at last
To truth — produced mysteriously as cape
Of cloud grown out of the invisible air.

Hence, may not truth be lodged alike in all,
The lowest as the highest? some slight film
The interposing bar which binds a soul
And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage
Some film removed, the happy outlet whence
Truth issues proudly? See this soul of ours!
How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed
In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled
By age and waste, set free at last by death:
Why is it, flesh enthralls it or enthrones?
What is this flesh we have to penetrate?
Oh, not alone when life flows still, do truth
And power emerge, but also when strange chance
Ruffles its current; in unused conjuncture,
When sickness breaks the body — hunger, watching,
Excess or languor — oftenest death's approach,
Peril, deep joy or woe. One man shall crawl
Through life surrounded with all stirring things,
Unmoved; and he goes mad: and from the wreck
Of what he was, by his wild talk alone,
You first collect how great a spirit he hid.
Therefore, set free the soul alike in all,
Discovering the true laws by which the flesh
Accloys the spirit! We may not be doomed
To cope with seraphs, but at least the rest
Shall cope with us. Make no more giants, God,
But elevate the race at once! We ask
To put forth just our strength, our human strength,
All starting fairly, all equipped alike,
Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-hearted —
See if we cannot beat thine angels yet!
Such is my task. I go to gather this
The sacred knowledge, here and there dispersed
About the world, long lost or never found.

And why should I be sad or lorn of hope?
Why ever make man's good distinct from God's,
Or, finding they are one, why dare mistrust?
Who shall succeed if not one pledged like me?
Mine is no mad attempt to build a world
Apart from his, like those who set themselves
To find the nature of the spirit they bore,
And, taught betimes that all their gorgeous dreams
Were only born to vanish in this life,
Refused to fit them to its narrow sphere,
But chose to figure forth another world
And other frames meet for their vast desires, —
And all a dream! Thus was life scorned; but life
Shall yet be crowned: twine amaranth! I am priest!
And all for yielding with a lively spirit
A poor existence, parting with a youth
Like those who squander every energy
Convertible to good, on painted toys,
Breath-bubbles, gilded dust! And though I spurn
All adventitious aims, from empty praise
To love's award, yet whoso deems such helps
Important, and concerns himself for me,
May know even these will follow with the rest —
As in the steady rolling Mayne, asleep
Yonder, is mixed its mass of schistous ore.
My own affections laid to rest awhile,
Will waken purified, subdued alone
By all I have achieved. Till then — till then . . .
Ah, the time-wiling loitering of a page
Through bower and over lawn, till eve shall bring
The stately lady's presence whom he loves —
The broken sleep of the fisher whose rough coat
Enwraps the queenly pearl — these are faint types!
See, see, they look on me: I triumph now!

But one thing, Festus, Michal! I have told
All I shall e'er disclose to mortal: say —
Do you believe I shall accomplish this?
Festus. I do believe!
Michal. I ever did believe!
Paracelsus. Those words shall never fade from out my brain!
This earnest of the end shall never fade!
Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal,
Two points in the adventure of the diver,
One — when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
One — when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?
Festus, I plunge!
Festus. We wait you when you rise!

II. — PARACELSUS ATTAINS.

SCENE. — *Constantinople; the house of a Greek Conjurer.* 1521.

PARACELSUS.

Over the waters in the vaporous West
The sun goes down as in a sphere of gold
Behind the arm of the city, which between,
With all that length of domes and minarets,
Athwart the splendor, black and crooked runs
Like a Turk verse along a scimitar.
There lie, sullen memorial, and no more
Possess my aching sight! 'T is done at last.
Strange — and the juggles of a sallow cheat
Have won me to this act! 'T is as yon cloud
Should voyage unwrecked o'er many a mountain-top
And break upon a molehill. I have dared

Come to a pause with knowledge ; scan for once
The heights already reached, without regard
To the extent above ; fairly compute
All I have clearly gained ; for once excluding
A brilliant future to supply and perfect
All half-gains and conjectures and crude hopes :
And all because a fortune-teller wills
His credulous seekers should inscribe thus much
Their previous life's attainment, in his roll,
Before his promised secret, as he vaunts,
Make up the sum : and here amid the scrawled
Uncouth recordings of the dupes of this
Old arch-genethliac, lie my life's results !

A few blurred characters suffice to note
A stranger wandered long through many lands
And reaped the fruit he coveted in a few
Discoveries, as appended here and there,
The fragmentary produce of much toil,
In a dim heap, fact and surmise together
Confusedly massed as when acquired ; he was
Intent on gain to come too much to stay
And scrutinize the little gained : the whole
Slipt in the blank space 'twixt an idiot's gibber
And a mad lover's ditty — there it lies.

And yet those blottings chronicle a life —
A whole life, and my life ! Nothing to do,
No problem for the fancy, but a life
Spent and decided, wasted past retrieve
Or worthy beyond peer. Stay, what does this
Remembrancer set down concerning "life" ?
"'Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream,'
It is the echo of time ; and he whose heart

Beat first beneath a human heart, whose speech
Was copied from a human tongue, can never
Recall when he was living yet knew not this.
Nevertheless long seasons pass o'er him
Till some one hour's experience shows what nothing,
It seemed, could clearer show ; and ever after,
An altered brow and eye and gait and speech
Attest that now he knows the adage true,
'Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.'"

Ay, my brave chronicler, and this same hour
As well as any : now, let my time be !

Now ! I can go no farther ; well or ill,
'T is done. I must desist and take my chance.
I cannot keep on the stretch : 't is no back-shrinking —
For let but some assurance beam, some close
To my toil grow visible, and I proceed
At any price, though closing it, I die.
Else, here I pause. The old Greek's prophecy
Is like to turn out true : "I shall not quit
His chamber till I know what I desire !"
Was it the light wind sang it o'er the sea ?

An end, a rest ! strange how the notion, once
Encountered, gathers strength by moments ! Rest !
Where has it kept so long ? this throbbing brow
To cease, this beating heart to cease, all cruel
And gnawing thoughts to cease ! To dare let down
My strung, so high-strung brain, to dare unnerve
My harassed o'ertasked frame, to know my place,
My portion, my reward, even my failure,
Assigned, made sure forever ! To lose myself
Among the common creatures of the world.

To draw some gain from having been a man,
Neither to hope nor fear, to live at length!
Even in failure, rest! But rest in truth
And power and recompense . . . I hoped that once!

What, sunk insensibly so deep? Has all
Been undergone for this? This the request
My labor qualified me to present
With no fear of refusal? Had I gone
Slightingly through my task, and so judged fit
To moderate my hopes; nay, were it now
My sole concern to exculpate myself,
End things or mend them, — why, I could not choose
A humbler mood to wait for the event!
No, no, there needs not this; no, after all,
At worst I have performed my share of the task:
The rest is God's concern; mine, merely this,
To know that I have obstinately held
By my own work. The mortal whose brave foot
Has trod, unscathed, the temple-court so far
That he descries at length the shrine of shrines,
Must let no sneering of the demons' eyes,
Whom he could pass unquailing, fasten now
Upon him, fairly past their power; no, no —
He must not stagger, faint, fall down at last,
Having a charm to baffle them; behold,
He bares his front: a mortal ventures thus
Serene amid the echoes, beams and glooms!
If he be priest henceforth, if he wake up
The god of the place to ban and blast him there,
Both well! What's failure or success to me?
I have subdued my life to the one purpose
Whereto I ordained it; there alone I spy,
No doubt, that way I may be satisfied.

Yes, well have I subdued my life! beyond
The obligation of my strictest vow,
The contemplation of my wildest bond,
Which gave my nature freely up, in truth,
But in its actual state, consenting fully
All passionate impulses its soil was formed
To rear, should wither; but foreseeing not
The tract, doomed to perpetual barrenness,
Would seem one day, remembered as it was,
Beside the parched sand-waste which now it is,
Already strewn with faint blooms, viewless then.
I ne'er engaged to root up loves so frail
I felt them not; yet now, 't is very plain
Some soft spots had their birth in me at first,
If not love, say, like love: there was a time
When yet this wolfish hunger after knowledge
Set not remorselessly love's claims aside.
This heart was human once, or why recall
Einsiedeln, now, and Würzburg which the Mayne
Forsakes her course to fold as with an arm?

And Festus — my poor Festus, with his praise
And counsel and grave fears — where is he now
With the sweet maiden, long ago his bride?
I surely loved them — that last night, at least,
When we . . . gone! gone! the better. I am saved
The sad review of an ambitious youth
Choked by vile lusts, unnoticed in their birth,
But let grow up and wind around a will
Till action was destroyed. No, I have gone
Purging my path successively of aught
Wearing the distant likeness of such lusts.
I have made life consist of one idea:
Ere that was master, up till that was born,

I bear a memory of a pleasant life
Whose small events I treasure ; till one morn
I ran o'er the seven little grassy fields,
Startling the flocks of nameless birds, to tell
Poor Festus, leaping all the while for joy,
To leave all trouble for my future plans,
Since I had just determined to become
The greatest and most glorious man on earth.
And since that morn all life has been forgotten :
All is one day, one only step between
The outset and the end : one tyrant all-
Absorbing aim fills up the interspace,
One vast unbroken chain of thought, kept up
Through a career apparently adverse
To its existence : life, death, light and shadow,
The shows of the world, were bare receptacles
Or indices of truth to be wrung thence,
Not ministers of sorrow or delight :
A wondrous natural robe in which she went.
For some one truth would dimly beacon me
From mountains rough with pines, and flit and wink
O'er dazzling wastes of frozen snow, and tremble
Into assured light in some branching mine
Where ripens, swathed in fire, the liquid gold —
And all the beauty, all the wonder fell
On either side the truth, as its mere robe ;
I see the robe now — then I saw the form.
So far, then, I have voyaged with success,
So much is good, then, in this working sea
Which parts me from that happy strip of land :
But o'er that happy strip a sun shone, too !
And fainter gleams it as the waves grow rough,
And still more faint as the sea widens ; last
I sicken on a dead gulf streaked with light

From its own putrefying depths alone.
Then, God was pledged to take me by the hand:
Now, any miserable juggle can bid
My pride depart. All is alike at length:
God may take pleasure in confounding pride
By hiding secrets with the scorned and base —
I am here, in short: so little have I paused
Throughout! I never glanced behind to know
If I had kept my primal light from wane,
And thus insensibly am — what I am!

Oh, bitter; very bitter!
And more bitter,
To fear a deeper curse, an inner ruin,
Plague beneath plague, the last turning the first
To light beside its darkness. Let me weep
My youth and its brave hopes, all dead and gone,
In tears which burn! Would I were sure to win
Some startling secret in their stead, a tincture
Of force to flush old age with youth, or breed
Gold, or imprison moonbeams till they change
To opal shafts! — only that, hurling it
Indignant back, I might convince myself
My aims remained supreme and pure as ever!
Even now, why not desire, for mankind's sake,
That if I fail, some fault may be the cause,
That, though I sink, another may succeed?
O God, the despicable heart of us!
Shut out this hideous mockery from my heart!
'T was politic in you, Aureole, to reject
Single rewards, and ask them in the lump;
At all events, once launched, to hold straight on:
For now 't is all or nothing. Mighty profit
Your gains will bring if they stop short of such

Full consummation! As a man, you had
A certain share of strength; and that is gone
Already in the getting these you boast.
Do not they seem to laugh, as who should say —
"Great master, we are here indeed, dragged forth
To light; this hast thou done: be glad! Now, seek
The strength to use which thou hast spent in getting!"

And yet 't is much, surely 't is very much,
Thus to have emptied youth of all its gifts,
To feed a fire meant to hold out till morn
Arrived with inexhaustible light; and lo,
I have heaped up my last, and day dawns not!
And I am left with gray hair, faded hands,
And furrowed brow. Ha, have I, after all,
Mistaken the wild nursling of my breast?
Knowledge it seemed, and power, and recompense!
Was she who glided through my room of nights,
Who laid my head on her soft knees and smoothed
The damp locks, — whose sly soothings just began
When my sick spirit craved repose awhile —
God! was I fighting sleep off for death's sake?

God! Thou art mind! Unto the master-mind
Mind should be precious. Spare my mind alone!
All else I will endure; if, as I stand
Here, with my gains, thy thunder smite me down,
I bow me; 't is thy will, thy righteous will;
I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die;
And if no trace of my career remain
Save a thin corpse at pleasure of the wind
In these bright chambers level with the air,
See thou to it! But if my spirit fail,
My once proud spirit forsake me at the last,

Hast thou done well by me? So do not thou!
Crush not my mind, dear God, though I be crushed!
Hold me before the frequence of thy seraphs
And say — "I crushed him, lest he should disturb
My law. Men must not know their strength: behold
Weak and alone, how he had raised himself!"

But if delusions trouble me, and thou,
Not seldom felt with rapture in thy help
Throughout my toils and wanderings, dost intend
To work man's welfare through my weak endeavor,
To crown my mortal forehead with a beam
From thine own blinding crown, to smile, and guide
This puny hand and let the work so wrought
Be styled my work, — hear me! I covet not
An influx of new power, an angel's soul:
It were no marvel then — but I have reached
Thus far, a man; let me conclude, a man!
Give but one hour of my first energy,
Of that invincible faith, but only one!
That I may cover with an eagle-glance
The truths I have, and spy some certain way
To mould them, and completing them, possess!

Yet God is good: I started sure of that,
And why dispute it now? I'll not believe
But some undoubted warning long ere this
Had reached me: a fire-labarum was not deemed
Too much for the old founder of these walls.
Then, if my life has not been natural,
It has been monstrous: yet, till late, my course
So ardently engrossed me, that delight,
A pausing and reflecting joy, 'tis plain,
Could find no place in it. True, I am worn;
But who clothes summer, who is life itself?

God, that created all things, can renew!
And then, though after-life to please me now
Must have no likeness to the past, what hinders
Reward from springing out of toil, as changed
As bursts the flower from earth and root and stalk?
What use were punishment, unless some sin
Be first detected? let me know that first!
No man could ever offend as I have done . . .

[*A voice from within.*]

I hear a voice, perchance I heard
Long ago, but all too low,
So that scarce a care it stirred
If the voice were real or no:
I heard it in my youth when first
The waters of my life outburst:
But, now their stream ebbs faint, I hear
That voice, still low, but fatal-clear —
As if all poets, God ever meant
Should save the world, and therefore lent
Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused
To do his work, or lightly used
Those gifts, or failed through weak endeavor,
So, mourn cast off by him forever, —
As if these leaned in airy ring
To take me; this the song they sing.

"Lost, lost! yet come,
With our wan troop make thy home.
Come, come! for we
Will not breathe, so much as breathe
Reproach to thee,
Knowing what thou sink'st beneath.
So sank we in those old years,

We who bid thee, come ! thou last
Who, living yet, hast life o'erpast.
And altogether we, thy peers,
Will pardon crave for thee, the last
Whose trial is done, whose lot is cast
With those who watch but work no more,
Who gaze on life but live no more.
Yet we trusted thou shouldst speak
The message which our lips, too weak,
Refused to utter, — shouldst redeem
Our fault: such trust, and all a dream !
Yet we chose thee a birthplace
Where the richness ran to flowers :
Couldst not sing one song for grace ?
Not make one blossom man's and ours ?
Must one more recreant to his race
Die with unexerted powers,
And join us, leaving as he found
The world, he was to loosen, bound ?
Anguish ! ever and forever ;
Still beginning, ending never.
Yet, lost and last one, come !
How couldst understand, alas,
What our pale ghosts strove to say,
As their shades did glance and pass
Before thee night and day ?
Thou wast blind as we were dumb :
Once more, therefore, come, O come !
How should we clothe, how arm the spirit
Shall next thy post of life inherit —
How guard him from thy speedy ruin ?
Tell us of thy sad undoing
Here, where we sit, ever pursuing
Our weary task, ever renewing

Sharp sorrow, far from God who gave
Our powers, and man they could not save!"

APRILE *enters.*

Ha, ha! our king that wouldst be, here at last?
Art thou the poet who shall save the world?
Thy hand to mine! Stay, fix thine eyes on mine!
Thou wouldst be king? Still fix thine eyes on mine!
Paracelsus. Ha, ha! why crouchest not? Am I not king?
So torture is not wholly unavailing!
Have my fierce spasms compelled thee from thy lair?
Art thou the sage I only seemed to be,
Myself of after-time, my very self
With sight a little clearer, strength more firm,
Who robes him in my robe and grasps my crown
For just a fault, a weakness, a neglect?
I scarcely trusted God with the surmise
That such might come, and thou didst hear the while!
Aprile. Thine eyes are lustreless to mine; my hair
Is soft, nay silken soft: to talk with thee
Flushes my cheek, and thou art ashy-pale.
Truly, thou hast labored, hast withstood her lips,
The siren's! Yes, 't is like thou hast attained!
Tell me, dear master, wherefore now thou comest?
I thought thy solemn songs would have their meed
In after-time; that I should hear the earth
Exult in thee and echo with thy praise,
While I was laid forgotten in my grave.
Paracelsus. Ah fiend, I know thee, I am not thy dupe!
Thou art ordained to follow in my track,
Reaping my sowing, as I scorned to reap
The harvest sown by sages passed away.

Thou art the sober searcher, cautious striver,
As if, except through me, thou hast searched or striven!
Ay, tell the world! Degrade me after all,
To an aspirant after fame, not truth —
To all but envy of thy fate, be sure!
Aprile. Nay, sing them to me; I shall envy not:
Thou shalt be king! Sing thou, and I will sit
Beside, and call deep silence for thy songs,
And worship thee, as I had ne'er been meant
To fill thy throne: but none shall ever know!
Sing to me; for already thy wild eyes
Unlock my heart-strings, as some crystal-shaft
Reveals by some chance blaze its parent fount
After long time: so thou reveal'st my soul.
All will flash forth at last, with thee to hear!
Paracelsus. (His secret! I shall get his secret — fool!)
I am he that aspired to KNOW: and thou?
Aprile. I would LOVE infinitely, and be loved!
Paracelsus. Poor slave! I am thy king indeed.
Aprile. Thou deem'st
That — born a spirit, dowered even as thou,
Born for thy fate — because I could not curb
My yearnings to possess at once the full
Enjoyment, but neglected all the means
Of realizing even the frailest joy,
Gathering no fragments to appease my want,
Yet nursing up that want till thus I die —
Thou deem'st I cannot trace thy safe sure march
O'er perils that o'erwhelm me, triumphing,
Neglecting naught below for aught above,
Despising nothing and ensuring all —
Nor that I could (my time to come again)
Lead thus my spirit securely as thine own.

Listen, and thou shalt see I know thee well.
I would love infinitely . . . Ah, lost! lost!
Oh ye who armed me at such cost,
How shall I look on all of ye
With your gifts even yet on me?
Paracelsus. (Ah, 'tis some moonstruck creature after all!
Such fond fools as are like to haunt this den:
They spread contagion, doubtless: yet he seemed
To echo one foreboding of my heart
So truly, that . . . no matter! How he stands
With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair
Which turns to it as if they were akin:
And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue
Nearly set free, so far they rise above
The painful fruitless striving of the brow
And enforced knowledge of the lips, firm-set
In slow despondency's eternal sigh!
Has he, too, missed life's end, and learned the cause?)
I charge thee, by thy fealty, be calm!
Tell me what thou wouldst be, and what I am.
Aprile. I would love infinitely, and be loved.
First: I would carve in stone, or cast in brass,
The forms of earth. No ancient hunter lifted
Up to the gods by his renown, no nymph
Supposed the sweet soul of a woodland tree
Or sapphirine spirit of a twilight star,
Should be too hard for me; no shepherd-king
Regal for his white locks; no youth who stands
Silent and very calm amid the throng,
His right hand ever hid beneath his robe
Until the tyrant pass; no lawgiver,
No swan-soft woman rubbed with lucid oils
Given by a god for love of her — too hard!

Every passion sprung from man, conceived by man.
Would I express and clothe it in its right form,
Or blend with others struggling in one form,
Or show repressed by an ungainly form.
Oh, if you marvelled at some mighty spirit
With a fit frame to execute its will —
Even unconsciously to work its will —
You should be moved no less beside some strong
Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,
Endeavoring to subdue it and inform it
With its own splendor! All this I would do:
And I would say, this done, "His sprites created,
God grants to each a sphere to be its world,
Appointed with the various objects needed
To satisfy its own peculiar want;
So, I create a world for these my shapes
Fit to sustain their beauty and their strength!"
And, at the word, I would contrive and paint
Woods, valleys, rocks and plains, dells, sands and wastes,
Lakes which, when morn breaks on their quivering bed,
Blaze like a wyvern flying round the sun,
And ocean isles so small, the dog-fish tracking
A dead whale, who should find them, would swim thrice
Around them, and fare onward — all to hold
The offspring of my brain. Nor these alone:
Bronze labyrinth, palace, pyramid and crypt,
Baths, galleries, courts, temples and terraces,
Marts, theatres and wharfs — all filled with men,
Men everywhere! And this performed in turn,
When those who looked on, pined to hear the hopes
And fears and hates and loves which moved the crowd,
I would throw down the pencil as the chisel,

And I would speak; no thought which ever stirred
A human breast should be untold; all passions,
All soft emotions, from the turbulent stir
Within a heart fed with desires like mine,
To the last comfort shutting the tired lids
Of him who sleeps the sultry noon away
Beneath the tent-tree by the wayside well:
And this in language as the need should be,
Now poured at once forth in a burning flow,
Now piled up in a grand array of words.
This done, to perfect and consummate all,
Even as a luminous haze links star to star,
I would supply all chasms with music, breathing
Mysterious motions of the soul, no way
To be defined save in strange melodies.
Last, having thus revealed all I could love,
Having received all love bestowed on it,
I would die: preserving so throughout my course
God full on me, as I was full on men:
He would approve my prayer, "I have gone through
The loveliness of life; create for me
If not for men, or take me to thyself,
Eternal, infinite love!"
If thou hast ne'er
Conceived this mighty aim, this full desire,
Thou hast not passed my trial, and thou art
No king of mine.

Paracelsus. Ah me!

Aprile. But thou art here!
Thou didst not gaze like me upon that end
Till thine own powers for compassing the bliss
Were blind with glory; nor grow mad to grasp
At once the prize long patient toil should claim,
Nor spurn all granted short of that. And I

Would do as thou, a second time: nay, listen!
Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great,
Our time so brief, 't is clear if we refuse
The means so limited, the tools so rude
To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.
We will be wise in time: what though our work
Be fashioned in despite of their ill-service,
Be crippled every way? 'T were little praise
Did full resources wait on our goodwill
At every turn. Let all be as it is.
Some say the earth is even so contrived
That tree and flower, a vesture gay, conceal
A bare and skeleton framework. Had we means
Answering to our mind! But now I seem
Wrecked on a savage isle: how rear thereon
My palace? Branching palms the props shall be,
Fruit glossy mingling; gems are for the East;
Who heeds them? I can pass them. Serpents' scales,
And painted birds' down, furs and fishes' skins
Must help me; and a little here and there
Is all I can aspire to: still my art
Shall show its birth was in a gentler clime.
"Had I green jars of malachite, this way
I 'd range them: where those sea-shells glisten above,
Cressets should hang, by right: this way we set
The purple carpets, as these mats are laid,
Woven of fern and rush and blossoming flag."
Or if, by fortune, some completer grace
Be spared to me, some fragment, some slight sample
Of the prouder workmanship my own home boasts,
Some trifle little heeded there, but here
The place's one perfection — with what joy
Would I enshrine the relic, cheerfully

Foregoing all the marvels out of reach!
Could I retain one strain of all the psalm
Of the angels, one word of the fiat of God,
To let my followers know what such things are!
I would adventure nobly for their sakes:
When nights were still, and still the moaning sea,
And far away I could descry the land
Whence I departed, whither I return,
I would dispart the waves, and stand once more
At home, and load my bark, and hasten back,
And fling my gains to them, worthless or true.
"Friends," I would say, "I went far, far for them,
Past the high rocks the haunt of doves, the mounds
Of red earth from whose sides strange trees grow out,
Past tracks of milk-white minute blinding sand,
Till, by a mighty moon, I tremblingly
Gathered these magic herbs, berry and bud,
In haste, not pausing to reject the weeds,
But happy plucking them at any price.
To me, who have seen them bloom in their own soil,
They are scarce lovely: plait and wear them, you!
And guess, from what they are, the springs that fed them,
The stars that sparkled o'er them, night by night,
The snakes that travelled far to sip their dew!"
Thus for my higher loves; and thus even weakness
Would win me honor. But not these alone
Should claim my care; for common life, its wants
And ways, would I set forth in beauteous hues:
The lowest hind should not possess a hope,
A fear, but I'd be by him, saying better
Than he his own heart's language. I would live
Forever in the thoughts I thus explored,
As a discoverer's memory is attached

To all he finds; they should be mine henceforth,
Imbued with me, though free to all before:
For clay, once cast into my soul's rich mine,
Should come up crusted o'er with gems. Nor this
Would need a meaner spirit, than the first;
Nay, 't would be but the selfsame spirit, clothed
In humbler guise, but still the selfsame spirit:
As one spring wind unbinds the mountain snow
And comforts violets in their hermitage.

But, master, poet, who hast done all this,
How didst thou 'scape the ruin whelming me?
Didst thou, when nerving thee to this attempt,
Ne'er range thy mind's extent, as some wide hall,
Dazzled by shapes that filled its length with light,
Shapes clustered there to rule thee, not obey,
That will not wait thy summons, will not rise
Singly, nor when thy practised eye and hand
Can well transfer their loveliness, but crowd
By thee forever, bright to thy despair?
Didst thou ne'er gaze on each by turns, and ne'er
Resolve to single out one, though the rest
Should vanish, and to give that one, entire
In beauty, to the world; forgetting, so,
Its peers, whose number baffles mortal power?
And, this determined, wast thou ne'er seduced
By memories and regrets and passionate love,
To glance once more farewell? and did their eyes
Fasten thee, brighter and more bright, until
Thou couldst but stagger back unto their feet,
And laugh that man's applause or welfare ever
Could tempt thee to forsake them? Or when years
Had passed and still their love possessed thee wholly,
When from without some murmur startled thee

Of darkling mortals famished for one ray
Of thy so-hoarded luxury of light,
Didst thou ne'er strive even yet to break those spells
And prove thou couldst recover and fulfil
Thy early mission, long ago renounced,
And to that end, select some shape once more?
And did not mist-like influences, thick films,
Faint memories of the rest that charmed so long
Thine eyes, float fast, confuse thee, bear thee off,
As whirling snow-drifts blind a man who treads
A mountain ridge, with guiding spear, through storm?
Say, though I fell, I had excuse to fall;
Say, I was tempted sorely: say but this,
Dear lord, Aprile's lord!

Paracelsus. Clasp me not thus,
Aprile! That the truth should reach me thus!
We are weak dust. Nay, clasp not or I faint!

Aprile. My king! and envious thoughts could outrage thee?
Lo, I forget my ruin, and rejoice
In thy success, as thou! Let our God's praise
Go bravely through the world at last! What care
Through me or thee? I feel thy breath. Why, tears?
Tears in the darkness, and from thee to me?

Paracelsus. Love me henceforth, Aprile, while I learn
To love; and, merciful God, forgive us both!
We wake at length from weary dreams; but both
Have slept in fairy-land: though dark and drear
Appears the world before us, we no less
Wake with our wrists and ankles jewelled still.
I too have sought to KNOW as thou to LOVE—
Excluding love as thou refusedst knowledge.

Still thou hast beauty and I, power. We wake:
What penance canst devise for both of us?
Aprile. I hear thee faintly. The thick darkness. Even
Thine eyes are hid. 'T is as I knew: I speak,
And now I die. But I have seen thy face!
O poet, think of me, and sing of me!
But to have seen thee and to die so soon!
Paracelsus. Die not, Aprile! We must never part.
Are we not halves of one dissevered world,
Whom this strange chance unites once more? Part? never!
Till thou the lover, know; and I, the knower,
Love — until both are saved. Aprile, hear!
We will accept our gains, and use them — now!
God, he will die upon my breast! Aprile!
Aprile. To speak but once, and die! yet by his side.
Hush! hush!
Ha! go you ever girt about
With phantoms, powers? I have created such,
But these seem real as I.
Paracelsus. Whom can you see
Through the accursed darkness?
Aprile. Stay; I know,
I know them: who should know them well as I?
White brows, lit up with glory; poets all!
Paracelsus. Let him but live, and I have my reward!
Aprile. Yes; I see now. God is the perfect poet,
Who in his person acts his own creations.
Had you but told me this at first! Hush! hush!
Paracelsus. Live! for my sake, because of my great sin,

To help my brain, oppressed by these wild words
And their deep import. Live! 't is not too late.
I have a quiet home for us, and friends.
Michal shall smile on you. Hear you? Lean thus,
And breathe my breath. I shall not lose one word
Of all your speech, one little word, Aprile!

Aprile. No, no. Crown me? I am not one of you!

'T is he, the king, you seek. I am not one.

Paracelsus. Thy spirit, at least, Aprile! Let me love!

I have attained, and now I may depart.

III. — PARACELSUS.

Scene. — *Basil; a chamber in the house of* Paracelsus. 1526.

Paracelsus, Festus.

Paracelsus. Heap logs and let the blaze laugh out!

Festus. True, true!

'T is very fit all, time and chance and change
Have wrought since last we sat thus, face to face
And soul to soul — all cares, far-looking fears,
Vague apprehensions, all vain fancies bred
By your long absence, should be cast away,
Forgotten in this glad unhoped renewal
Of our affections.

Paracelsus. Oh, omit not aught
Which witnesses your own and Michal's own
Affection: spare not that! Only forget
The honors and the glories and what not,
It pleases you to tell profusely out.

Festus. Nay, even your honors, in a sense, I waive:
The wondrous Paracelsus, life's dispenser,
Fate's commissary, idol of the schools
And courts, shall be no more than Aureole still,
Still Aureole and my friend as when we parted
Some twenty years ago, and I restrained
As best I could the promptings of my spirit
Which secretly advanced you, from the first,
To the pre-eminent rank which, since, your own
Adventurous ardor, nobly triumphing,
Has won for you.

Paracelsus. Yes, yes. And Michal's face
Still wears that quiet and peculiar light
Like the dim circlet floating round a pearl?

Festus. Just so.

Paracelsus. And yet her calm sweet countenance,
Though saintly, was not sad; for she would sing
Alone. Does she still sing alone, bird-like,
Not dreaming you are near? Her carols dropt
In flakes through that old leafy bower built under
The sunny wall at Würzburg, from her lattice
Among the trees above, while I, unseen,
Sat conning some rare scroll from Tritheim's shelves
Much wondering notes so simple could divert
My mind from study. Those were happy days.
Respect all such as sing when all alone!

Festus. Scarcely alone: her children, you may guess,
Are wild beside her.

Paracelsus. Ah, those children quite
Unsettle the pure picture in my mind:
A girl, she was so perfect, so distinct:
No change, no change! Not but this added grace
May blend and harmonize with its compeers,
And Michal may become her motherhood;

But 't is a change, and I detest all change,
And most a change in aught I loved long since.
So, Michal — you have said she thinks of me?
Festus. O very proud will Michal be of you!
Imagine how we sat, long winter-nights,
Scheming and wondering, shaping your presumed
Adventure, or devising its reward;
Shutting out fear with all the strength of hope.
For it was strange how, even when most secure
In our domestic peace, a certain dim
And flitting shade could sadden all; it seemed
A restlessness of heart, a silent yearning,
A sense of something wanting, incomplete —
Not to be put in words, perhaps avoided
By mute consent — but, said or unsaid, felt
To point to one so loved and so long lost.
And then the hopes rose and shut out the fears — 60
How you would laugh should I recount them now!
I still predicted your return at last
With gifts beyond the greatest of them all,
All Tritheim's wondrous troop; did one of which
Attain renown by any chance, I smiled,
As well aware of who would prove his peer.
Michal was sure some woman, long ere this,
As beautiful as you were sage, had loved . . .
Paracelsus. Far-seeing, truly, to discern so much
In the fantastic projects and day-dreams 70
Of a raw restless boy!
Festus. Oh, no: the sunrise
Well warranted our faith in this full noon!
Can I forget the anxious voice which said
"Festus, have thoughts like these ere shaped themselves
In other brains than mine? have their possessors
Existed in like circumstance? were they weak

As I, or ever constant from the first,
Despising youth's allurements and rejecting
As spider-films the shackles I endure?
Is there hope for me?" — and I answered gravely
As an acknowledged elder, calmer, wiser,
More gifted mortal. O you must remember,
For all your glorious . . .
Paracelsus. Glorious? ay, this hair,
These hands — nay, touch them, they are mine! Recall
With all the said recallings, times when thus
To lay them by your own ne'er turned you pale
As now. Most glorious, are they not?
Festus. Why — why —
Something must be subtracted from success
So wide, no doubt. He would be scrupulous, truly,
Who should object such drawbacks. Still, still, Aureole,
You are changed, very changed! 'T were losing nothing
To look well to it: you must not be stolen
From the enjoyment of your well-won meed.
Paracelsus. My friend! you seek my pleasure, past a doubt:
You will best gain your point, by talking, not
Of me, but of yourself.
Festus. Have I not said
All touching Michal and my children? Sure
You know, by this, full well how Aennchen looks
Gravely, while one disparts her thick brown hair;
And Aureole's glee when some stray gannet builds
Amid the birch-trees by the lake. Small hope
Have I that he will honor (the wild imp)
His namesake. Sigh not! 't is too much to ask

That all we love should reach the same proud fate.
But you are very kind to humor me
By showing interest in my quiet life;
You, who of old could never tame yourself
To tranquil pleasures, must at heart despise . . .

Paracelsus. Festus, strange secrets are let out by death
Who blabs so oft the follies of this world:
And I am death's familiar, as you know.
I helped a man to die, some few weeks since,
Warped even from his go-cart to one end —
The living on princes' smiles, reflected from
A mighty herd of favorites. No mean trick
He left untried, and truly well-nigh wormed
All traces of God's finger out of him:
Then died, grown old. And just an hour before,
Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes,
He sat up suddenly, and with natural voice
Said that in spite of thick air and closed doors
God told him it was June; and he knew well,
Without such telling, harebells grew in June;
And all that kings could ever give or take
Would not be precious as those blooms to him.
Just so, allowing I am passing sage,
It seems to me much worthier argument
Why pansies, eyes that laugh, bear beauty's prize
From violets, eyes that dream — (your Michàl's choice) —
Than all fools find to wonder at in me
Or in my fortunes. And be very sure
I say this from no prurient restlessness,
No self-complacency, itching to turn,
Vary and view its pleasure from all points,
And, in this instance, willing other men

May be at pains, demonstrate to itself
The realness of the very joy it tastes.
What should delight me like the news of friends
Whose memories were a solace to me oft,
As mountain-baths to wild fowls in their flight? 140
Ofter than you had wasted thought on me
Had you been wise, and rightly valued bliss.
But there 's no taming nor repressing hearts:
God knows I need such! — So, you heard me speak?

Festus. Speak? when?

Paracelsus. When but this morning at my class?
There was noise and crowd enough. I saw you not.
Surely you know I am engaged to fill
The chair here? — that 't is part of my proud fate
To lecture to as many thick-skulled youths
As please, each day, to throng the theatre, 150
To my great reputation, and no small
Danger of Basil's benches long unused
To crack beneath such honor?

Festus. I was there;
I mingled with the throng: shall I avow
Small care was mine to listen? — too intent
On gathering from the murmurs of the crowd
A full corroboration of my hopes!
What can I learn about your powers? but they
Know, care for naught beyond your actual state,
Your actual value; yet they worship you, 160
Those various natures whom you sway as one!
But ere I go, be sure I shall attend . . .

Paracelsus. Stop, o' God's name: the thing 's by no means yet
Past remedy! Shall I read this morning's labor
— At least in substance? Naught so worth the gaining
As an apt scholar! Thus then, with all due

Precision and emphasis — you, beside, are clearly
Guiltless of understanding more, a whit,
The subject than your stool — allowed to be
A notable advantage.
Festus. Surely, Aureole,
You laugh at me!
Paracelsus. I laugh? Ha, ha! thank heaven,
I charge you, if 't be so! for I forget
Much, and what laughter should be like. No less,
However, I forego that luxury
Since it alarms the friend who brings it back.
True, laughter like my own must echo strangely
To thinking men; a smile were better far;
So, make me smile! If the exulting look
You wore but now be smiling, 't is so long
Since I have smiled! Alas, such smiles are born
Alone of hearts like yours, or herdsmen's souls
Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as their flocks,
Saw in the stars mere garnishry of heaven,
And in the earth a stage for altars only.
Never change, Festus: I say, never change!
Festus. My God, if he be wretched after all!
Paracelsus. When last we parted, Festus, you declared,
— Or Michal, yes, her soft lips whispered words
I have preserved. She told me she believed
I should succeed (meaning, that in the search
I then engaged in, I should meet success)
And yet be wretched: now, she augured false.
Festus. Thank heaven! but you spoke strangely. Could I venture
To think bare apprehension lest your friend,
Dazzled by your resplendent course, might find
Henceforth less sweetness in his own, could move

Such earnest mood in you? Fear not, dear friend,
That I shall leave you, inwardly repining
Your lot was not my own!
Paracelsus. And this forever!
Forever! gull who may, they will be gulled!
They will not look nor think; 't is nothing new
In them: but surely he is not of them!
My Festus, do you know, I reckoned, you —
Though all beside were sand-blind — you, my friend,
Would look at me, once close, with piercing eye
Untroubled by the false glare that confounds
A weaker vision: would remain serene,
Though singular amid a gaping throng.
I feared you, or I had come, sure, long ere this,
To Einsiedeln. Well, error has no end,
And Rhasis is a sage, and Basil boasts
A tribe of wits, and I am wise and blest
Past all dispute! 'T is vain to fret at it.
I have vowed long ago my worshippers
Shall owe to their own deep sagacity
All further information, good or bad.
Small risk indeed my reputation runs,
Unless perchance the glance now searching me
Be fixed much longer; for it seems to spell
Dimly the characters a simpler man
Might read distinct enough. Old Eastern books
Say, the fallen prince of morning some short space
Remained unchanged in semblance; nay, his brow
Was hued with triumph: every spirit then
Praising, *his* heart on flame the while: — a tale!
Well, Festus, what discover you, I pray?
Festus. Some foul deed sullies then a life which else
Were raised supreme?
Paracelsus. Good: I do well, most well!

Why strive to make men hear, feel, fret themselves
With what is past their power to comprehend?
I should not strive now: only, having nursed
The faint surmise that one yet walked the earth,
One, at least, not the utter fool of show,
Not absolutely formed to be the dupe
Of shallow plausibilities alone:
One who, in youth, found wise enough to choose
The happiness his riper years approve,
Was yet so anxious for another's sake,
That, ere his friend could rush upon a mad
And ruinous course, the converse of his own,
His gentle spirit essayed, prejudged for him
The perilous path, foresaw its destiny,
And warned the weak one in such tender words,
Such accents — his whole heart in every tone —
That oft their memory comforted that friend
When it by right should have increased despair:
— Having believed, I say, that this one man
Could never lose the light thus from the first
His portion — how should I refuse to grieve
At even my gain if it disturb our old
Relation, if it make me out more wise?
Therefore, once more reminding him how well
He prophesied, I note the single flaw
That spoils his prophet's title. In plain words,
You were deceived, and thus were you deceived —
I have not been successful, and yet am
Most miserable; 't is said at last; nor you
Give credit, lest you force me to concede
That common sense yet lives upon the world!

Festus. You surely do not mean to banter me?

Paracelsus. You know, or — if you have been wise enough

To cleanse your memory of such matters — knew,
As far as words of mine could make it clear,
That 't was my purpose to find joy or grief
Solely in the fulfilment of my plan
Or plot or whatsoe'er it was; rejoicing
Alone as it proceeded prosperously,
Sorrowing then only when mischance retarded
Its progress. That was in those Würzburg days!
Not to prolong a theme I thoroughly hate,
I have pursued this plan with all my strength;
And having failed therein most signally,
Cannot object to ruin utter and drear
As all-excelling would have been the prize
Had fortune favored me. I scarce have right
To vex your frank good spirit late so glad
In my supposed prosperity, I know,
And, were I lucky in a glut of friends,
Would well agree to let your error live,
Nay, strengthen it with fables of success.
But mine is no condition to refuse
The transient solace of so rare a godsend,
My solitary luxury, my one friend:
Accordingly I venture to put off
The wearisome vest of falsehood galling me,
Secure when he is by. I lay me bare,
Prone at his mercy — but he is my friend!
Not that he needs retain his aspect grave;
That answers not my purpose; for 't is like,
Some sunny morning — Basil being drained
Of its wise population, every corner
Of the amphitheatre crammed with learned clerks,
Here Œcolampadius, looking worlds of wit,
Here Castellanus, as profound as he,
Munsterus here, Frobenius there, all squeezed

And staring, — that the zany of the show,
Even Paracelsus, shall put off before them
His trappings with a grace but seldom judged
Expedient in such cases : — the grim smile
That will go round ! Is it not therefore best
To venture a rehearsal like the present
In a small way ? Where are the signs I seek,
The first-fruits and fair sample of the scorn
Due to all quacks ? Why, this will never do !

Festus. These are foul vapors, Aureole; naught beside !
The effect of watching, study, weariness.
Were there a spark of truth in the confusion
Of these wild words, you would not outrage thus
Your youth's companion. I shall ne'er regard
These wanderings, bred of faintness and much study.
'T is not thus you would trust a trouble to me,
To Michal's friend.

Paracelsus. I have said it, dearest Festus !
For the manner, 't is ungracious probably ;
You may have it told in broken sobs, one day,
And scalding tears, ere long : but I thought best
To keep that off as long as possible.
Do you wonder still ?

Festus. No; it must oft fall out
That one whose labor perfects any work,
Shall rise from it with eye so worn that he
Of all men least can measure the extent
Of what he has accomplished. He alone
Who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary too,
May clearly scan the little he effects :
But we, the bystanders, untouched by toil,
Estimate each aright.

Paracelsus. This worthy Festus

Is one of them, at last! 'T is so with all!
First, they set down all progress as a dream;
And next, when he whose quick discomfiture
Was counted on, accomplishes some few
And doubtful steps in his career, — behold,
They look for every inch of ground to vanish
Beneath his tread, so sure they spy success!
Festus. Few doubtful steps? when death retires before
Your presence — when the noblest of mankind,
Broken in body or subdued in soul,
May through your skill renew their vigor, raise
The shattered frame to pristine stateliness?
When men in racking pain may purchase dreams
Of what delights them most, swooning at once
Into a sea of bliss or rapt along
As in a flying sphere of turbulent light?
When we may look to you as one ordained
To free the flesh from fell disease, as frees
Our Luther's burning tongue the fettered soul?
When . . .
Paracelsus. When and where, the devil, did you get
This notable news?
Festus. Even from the common voice;
From those whose envy, daring not dispute
The wonders it decries, attributes them
To magic and such folly.
Paracelsus. Folly? Why not
To magic, pray? You find a comfort doubtless
In holding, God ne'er troubles him about
Us or our doings: once we were judged worth
The devil's tempting . . . I offend: forgive me,
And rest content. Your prophecy on the whole

Was fair enough as prophesyings go;
At fault a little in detail, but quite
Precise enough in the main; and hereupon
I pay due homage: you guessed long ago
(The prophet!) I should fail — and I have failed.
Festus. You mean to tell me, then, the hopes which fed
Your youth have not been realized as yet
Some obstacle has barred them hitherto?
Or that their innate . . .
Paracelsus. As I said but now,
You have a very decent prophet's fame,
So you but shun details here. Little matter
Whether those hopes were mad, — the aims they sought,
Safe and secure from all ambitious fools;
Or whether my weak wits are overcome
By what a better spirit would scorn: I fail.
And now methinks 't were best to change a theme
I am a sad fool to have stumbled on.
I say confusedly what comes uppermost;
But there are times when patience proves at fault,
As now: this morning's strange encounter — you
Beside me once again! you, whom I guessed
Alive, since hitherto (with Luther's leave)
No friend have I among the saints at peace,
To judge by any good their prayers effect.
I knew you would have helped me — why not he,
My strange competitor in enterprise,
Bound for the same end by another path,
Arrived, or ill or well, before the time,
At our disastrous journey's doubtful close?
How goes it with Aprile? Ah, they miss
Your lone sad sunny idleness of heaven,

Our martyrs for the world's sake; heaven shuts fast:
The poor mad poet is howling by this time!
Since you are my sole friend then, here or there,
I could not quite repress the varied feelings
This meeting wakens; they have had their vent,
And now forget them. Do the rear-mice still
Hang like a fretwork on the gate (or what
In my time was a gate) fronting the road
From Einsiedeln to Lachen?

Festus. Trifle not:
Answer me, for my sake alone! You smiled
Just now, when I supposed some deed, unworthy
Yourself, might blot the else so bright result;
Yet if your motives have continued pure,
Your will unfaltering, and in spite of this,
You have experienced a defeat, why then
I say not you would cheerfully withdraw
From contest — mortal hearts are not so fashioned —
But surely you would ne'ertheless withdraw.
You sought not fame nor gain nor even love,
No end distinct from knowledge, — I repeat
Your very words: once satisfied that knowledge
Is a mere dream, you would announce as much,
Yourself the first. But how is the event?
You are defeated — and I find you here!

Paracelsus. As though "here" did not signify
defeat!
I spoke not of my little labors here,
But of the break-down of my general aims:
For you, aware of their extent and scope,
To look on these sage lecturings, approved
By beardless boys, and bearded dotards worse,
As a fit consummation of such aims,
Is worthy notice. A professorship

At Basil! Since you see so much in it,
And think my life was reasonably drained
Of life's delights to render me a match
For duties arduous as such post demands, —
Be it far from me to deny my power
To fill the petty circle lotted out
Of infinite space, or justify the host
Of honors thence accruing. So, take notice,
This jewel dangling from my neck preserves
The features of a prince, my skill restored
To plague his people some few years to come:
And all through a pure whim. He had eased the earth
For me, but that the droll despair which seized
The vermin of his household, tickled me.
I came to see. Here, drivelled the physician,
Whose most infallible nostrum was at fault;
There quaked the astrologer, whose horoscope
Had promised him interminable years;
Here a monk fumbled at the sick man's mouth
With some undoubted relic — a sudary
Of the Virgin; while another piebald knave
Of the same brotherhood (he loved them ever)
Was actively preparing 'neath his nose
Such a suffumigation as, once fired,
Had stunk the patient dead ere he could groan.
I cursed the doctor and upset the brother,
Brushed past the conjurer, vowed that the first gust
Of stench from the ingredients just alight
Would raise a cross-grained devil in my sword,
Not easily laid: and ere an hour the prince
Slept as he never slept since prince he was.
A day — and I was posting for my life,
Placarded through the town as one whose spite

Had near availed to stop the blessed effects
Of the doctor's nostrum which, well seconded
By the sudary, and most by the costly smoke —
Not leaving out the strenuous prayers sent up
Hard by in the abbey — raised the prince to life:
To the great reputation of the seer
Who, confident, expected all along
The glad event — the doctor's recompense —
Much largess from his highness to the monks —
And the vast solace of his loving people,
Whose general satisfaction to increase,
The prince was pleased no longer to defer
The burning of some dozen heretics
Remanded till God's mercy should be shown
Touching his sickness: last of all were joined
Ample directions to all loyal folk
To swell the complement by seizing me
Who — doubtless some rank sorcerer — endeavored
To thwart these pious offices, obstruct
The prince's cure, and frustrate heaven by help
Of certain devils dwelling in his sword.
By luck, the prince in his first fit of thanks
Had forced this bauble on me as an earnest
Of further favors. This one case may serve
To give sufficient taste of many such,
So, let them pass. Those shelves support a pile
Of patents, licenses, diplomas, titles
From Germany, France, Spain, and Italy;
They authorize some honor; ne'ertheless,
I set more store by this Erasmus sent;
He trusts me; our Frobenius is his friend,
And him "I raised" (nay, read it) "from the dead."
I weary you, I see. I merely sought

To show, there 's no great wonder after all
That, while I fill the class-room and attract
A crowd to Basil, I get leave to stay,
And therefore need not scruple to accept
The utmost they can offer, if I please :
For 't is but right the world should be prepared
To treat with favor e'en fantastic wants
Of one like me, used up in serving her.
Just as the mortal, whom the gods in part
Devoured, received in place of his lost limb
Some virtue or other — cured disease, I think ;
You mind the fables we have read together.

Festus. You do not think I comprehend a word.
The time was, Aureole, you were apt enough
To clothe the airiest thoughts in specious breath ;
But surely you must feel how vague and strange
These speeches sound.

Paracelsus. Well, then : you know my hopes ;
I am assured, at length, those hopes were vain ;
That truth is just as far from me as ever ;
That I have thrown my life away ; that sorrow
On that account is idle, and further effort
To mend and patch what 's marred beyond repairing,
As useless : and all this was taught your friend
By the convincing good old-fashioned method
Of force — by sheer compulsion. Is that plain ?

Festus. Dear Aureole, can it be my fears were just ?
God wills not . . .

Paracelsus. Now, 't is this I most admire —
The constant talk men of your stamp keep up
Of God's will, as they style it ; one would swear
Man had but merely to uplift his eye,

And see the will in question charactered
On the heaven's vault. 'T is hardly wise to moot
Such topics: doubts are many and faith is weak.
I know as much of any will of God
As knows some dumb and tortured brute what Man,
His stern lord, wills from the perplexing blows
That plague him every way; but there, of course,
Where least he suffers, longest he remains —
My case; and for such reasons I plod on,
Subdued but not convinced. I know as little
Why I deserve to fail, as why I hoped
Better things in my youth. I simply know
I am no master here, but trained and beaten
Into the path I tread; and here I stay,
Until some further intimation reach me,
Like an obedient drudge. Though I prefer
To view the whole thing as a task imposed
Which, whether dull or pleasant, must be done —
Yet, I deny not, there is made provision
Of joys which tastes less jaded might affect;
Nay, some which please me too, for all my pride —
Pleasures that once were pains: the iron ring
Festering about a slave's neck grows at length
Into the flesh it eats. I hate no longer
A host of petty vile delights, undreamed of
Or spurned before; such now supply the place
Of my dead aims: as in the autumn woods
Where tall trees used to flourish, from their roots
Springs up a fungous brood sickly and pale,
Chill mushrooms colored like a corpse's cheek.

Festus. If I interpret well your words, I own
It troubles me but little that your aims,
Vast in their dawning and most likely grown
Extravagantly since, have baffled you.

Perchance I am glad; you merit greater praise;
Because they are too glorious to be gained,
You do not blindly cling to them and die;
You fell, but have not sullenly refused
To rise, because an angel worsted you
In wrestling, though the world holds not your peer,
And though too harsh and sudden is the change
To yield content as yet, still you pursue
The ungracious path as though 't were rosy-strewn.
'T is well: and your reward, or soon or late,
Will come from him whom no man serves in vain.

Paracelsus. Ah, very fine! For my part, I conceive
The very pausing from all further toil,
Which you find heinous, would become a seal
To the sincerity of all my deeds.
To be consistent I should die at once;
I calculated on no after-life;
Yet (how crept in, how fostered, I know not)
Here am I with as passionate regret
For youth and health and love so vainly lavished,
As if their preservation had been first
And foremost in my thoughts; and this strange fact
Humbled me wondrously, and had due force
In rendering me the less averse to follow
A certain counsel, a mysterious warning —
You will not understand — but 't was a man
With aims not mine and yet pursued like mine,
With the same fervor and no more success,
Perishing in my sight; who summoned me
As I would shun the ghastly fate I saw,
To serve my race at once; to wait no longer
That God should interfere in my behalf,
But to distrust myself, put pride away,
And give my gains, imperfect as they were,

To men. I have not leisure to explain
How, since, a singular series of events
Has raised me to the station you behold,
Wherein I seem to turn to most account
The mere wreck of the past, — perhaps receive
Some feeble glimmering token that God views
And may approve my penance: therefore here
You find me, doing most good or least harm.
And if folks wonder much and profit little
'T is not my fault; only, I shall rejoice
When my part in the farce is shuffled through,
And the curtain falls: I must hold out till then.
Festus. Till when, dear Aureole?
Paracelsus. Till I 'm fairly thrust
From my proud eminence. Fortune is fickle
And even professors fall: should that arrive,
I see no sin in ceding to my bent.
You little fancy what rude shocks apprise us
We sin; God's intimations rather fail
In clearness than in energy: 't were well
Did they but indicate the course to take
Like that to be forsaken. I would fain
Be spared a further sample. Here I stand,
And here I stay, be sure, till forced to flit.
Festus. Be you but firm on that head! long ere then
All I expect will come to pass, I trust:
The cloud that wraps you will have disappeared.
Meantime, I see small chance of such event:
They praise you here as one whose lore, already
Divulged, eclipses all the past can show,
But whose achievements, marvellous as they be,
Are faint anticipations of a glory
About to be revealed. When Basil's crowds

Dismiss their teacher, I shall be content
That he depart.

Paracelsus. This favor at their hands
I look for earlier than your view of things
Would warrant. Of the crowd you saw to-day,
Remove the full half sheer amazement draws,
Mere novelty, naught else ; and next, the tribe
Whose innate blockish dulness just perceives
That unless miracles (as seem my works)
Be wrought in their behalf, their chance is slight
To puzzle the devil ; next, the numerous set
Who bitterly hate established schools, and help
The teacher that oppugns them, till he once
Have planted his own doctrine, when the teacher
May reckon on their rancor in his turn ;
Take, too, ' sprinkling of sagacious knaves
Whose cunning runs not counter to the vogue
But seeks, by flattery and crafty nursing,
To force my system to a premature
Short-lived development. Why swell the list?
Each has his end to serve, and his best way
Of serving it : remove all these, remains
A scantling, a poor dozen at the best,
Worthy to look for sympathy and service,
And likely to draw profit from my pains.

Festus. 'T is no encouraging picture : still these few
Redeem their fellows. Once the germ implanted,
Its growth, if slow, is sure.

Paracelsus. God grant it so !
I would make some amends : but if I fail,
The luckless rogues have this excuse to urge,
That much is in my method and my manner,
My uncouth habits, my impatient spirit,
Which hinders of reception and result

My doctrine : much to say, small skill to speak !
These old aims suffered not a looking-off
Though for an instant ; therefore, only when
I thus renounced them and resolved to reap
Some present fruit — to teach mankind some truth
So dearly purchased — only then I found
Such teaching was an art requiring cares
And qualities peculiar to itself :
That to possess was one thing — to display
Another. With renown first in my thoughts,
Or popular praise, I had soon discovered it :
One grows but little apt to learn these things.
Festus. If it be so, which nowise I believe,
There needs no waiting fuller dispensation
To leave a labor of so little use.
Why not throw up the irksome charge at once ?
Paracelsus. A task, a task !
But wherefore hide the whole
Extent of degradation, once engaged
In the confessing vein ? Despite of all
My fine talk of obedience and repugnance,
Docility and what not, 't is yet to learn
If when the task shall really be performed,
My inclination free to choose once more,
I shall do aught but slightly modify
The nature of the hated task I quit.
In plain words, I am spoiled ; my life still tends
As first it tended ; I am broken and trained
To my old habits : they are part of me.
I know, and none so well, my darling ends
Are proved impossible : no less, no less,
Even now what humors me, fond fool, as when
Their faint ghosts sit with me and flatter me
And send me back content to my dull round ?

How can I change this soul? — this apparatus
Constructed solely for their purposes,
So well adapted to their every want,
To search out and discover, prove and perfect;
This intricate machine whose most minute
And meanest motions have their charm to me
Though to none else — an aptitude I seize,
An object I perceive, a use, a meaning,
A property, a fitness, I explain
And I alone: — how can I change my soul?
And this wronged body, worthless save when tasked
Under that soul's dominion — used to care
For its bright master's cares and quite subdue
Its proper cravings — not to ail nor pine
So he but prosper — whither drag this poor
Tried patient body? God! how I essayed
To live like that mad poet, for a while,
To love alone; and how I felt too warped
And twisted and deformed! What should I do,
Even tho' released from drudgery, but return
Faint, as you see, and halting, blind and sore,
To my old life and die as I began?
I cannot feed on beauty for the sake
Of beauty only, nor can drink in balm
From lovely objects for their loveliness;
My nature cannot lose her first imprint;
I still must hoard and heap and class all truths
With one ulterior purpose: I must know!
Would God translate me to his throne, believe
That I should only listen to his word
To further my own aim! For other men,
Beauty is prodigally strewn around,
And I were happy could I quench as they
This mad and thriveless longing, and content me

With beauty for itself alone: alas,
I have addressed a frock of heavy mail
Yet may not join the troop of sacred knights;
And now the forest-creatures fly from me,
The grass-banks cool, the sunbeams warm no more.
Best follow, dreaming that ere night arrive,
I shall o'ertake the company and ride
Glittering as they!

Festus. I think I apprehend
What you would say: if you, in truth, design
To enter once more on the life thus left,
Seek not to hide that all this consciousness
Of failure is assumed!

Paracelsus. My friend, my friend,
I toil, you listen; I explain, perhaps
You understand: there our communion ends.
Have you learnt nothing from to-day's discourse?
When we would thoroughly know the sick man's state
We feel awhile the fluttering pulse, press soft
The hot brow, look upon the languid eye,
And thence divine the rest. Must I lay bare
My heart, hideous and beating, or tear up
My vitals for your gaze, ere you will deem
Enough made known? You! who are you, forsooth?
That is the crowning operation claimed
By the arch-demonstrator — heaven the hall,
And earth the audience. Let Aprile and you
Secure good places: 't will be worth the while.

Festus. Are you mad, Aureole? What can I have said
To call for this? I judged from your own words.

Paracelsus. Oh, doubtless! A sick wretch describes the ape

That mocks him from the bed-foot, and all gravely
You thither turn at once: or he recounts
The perilous journey he has late performed,
And you are puzzled much how that could be!
You find me here, half stupid and half mad:
It makes no part of my delight to search
Into these matters, much less undergo
Another's scrutiny; but so it chances
That I am led to trust my state to you:
And the event is, you combine, contrast
And ponder on my foolish words as though
They thoroughly conveyed all hidden here —
Here, loathsome with despair and hate and rage!
Is there no fear, no shrinking and no shame?
Will you guess nothing? will you spare me nothing?
Must I go deeper? Ay or no?

Festus. Dear friend . . .

Paracelsus. True: I am brutal — 'tis a part of it;
The plague's sign — you are not a lazar-haunter,
How should you know? Well then, you think it strange
I should profess to have failed utterly,
And yet propose an ultimate return
To courses void of hope: and this, because
You know not what temptation is, nor how
'T is like to ply men in the sickliest part.
You are to understand that we who make
Sport for the gods, are hunted to the end:
There is not one sharp volley shot at us,
Which 'scaped with life, though hurt, we slacken pace
And gather by the wayside herbs and roots
To stanch our wounds, secure from further harm:
We are assailed to life's extremest verge.
It will be well indeed if I return,
A harmless busy fool, to my old ways!

I would forget hints of another fate,
Significant enough, which silent hours
Have lately scared me with.
Festus. Another! and what?
Paracelsus. After all, Festus, you say well: I am
A man yet: I need never humble me.
I would have been — something, I know not what;
But though I cannot soar, I do not crawl.
There are worse portions than this one of mine.
You say well!
Festus. Ah!
Paracelsus. And deeper degradation!
If the mean stimulants of vulgar praise,
If vanity should become the chosen food
Of a sunk mind, should stifle even the wish
To find its early aspirations true,
Should teach it to breathe falsehood like life-breath —
An atmosphere of craft and trick and lies;
Should make it proud to emulate, surpass
Base natures in the practices which woke
Its most indignant loathing once . . . No, no!
Utter damnation is reserved for hell!
I had immortal feelings; such shall never
Be wholly quenched: no, no!
My friend, you wear
A melancholy face, and certain 't is
There 's little cheer in all this dismal work.
But was it my desire to set abroach
Such memories and forebodings? I foresaw
Where they would drive. 'T were better we discuss
News from Lucerne or Zurich; ask and tell
Of Egypt's flaring sky or Spain's cork-groves.
Festus. I have thought: trust me, this mood will pass away!

I know you and the lofty spirit you bear,
And easily ravel out a clue to all.
These are the trials meet for such as you,
Nor must you hope exemption: to be mortal
Is to be plied with trials manifold.
Look round! The obstacles which kept the rest
From your ambition, have been spurned by you;
Their fears, their doubts, the chains that bind them all,
Were flax before your resolute soul, which naught
Avails to awe save these delusions bred
From its own strength, its selfsame strength disguised,
Mocking itself. Be brave, dear Aureole! Since
The rabbit has his shade to frighten him,
The fawn a rustling bough, mortals their cares,
And higher natures yet would slight and laugh
At these entangling fantasies, as you
At trammels of a weaker intellect, —
Measure your mind's height by the shade it casts!
I know you.

Paracelsus. And I know you, dearest Festus!
And how you love unworthily; and how
All admiration renders blind.

Festus. You hold
That admiration blinds?

Paracelsus. Ay and alas!

Festus. Naught blinds you less than admiration, friend!
Whether it be that all love renders wise
In its degree; from love which blends with love —
Heart answering heart — to love which spends itself
In silent mad idolatry of some
Pre-eminent mortal, some great soul of souls,
Which ne'er will know how well it is adored.

I say, such love is never blind; but rather
Alive to every the minutest spot
Which mars its object, and which hate (supposed
So vigilant and searching) dreams not of.
Love broods on such: what then? When first perceived
Is there no sweet strife to forget, to change,
To overflush those blemishes with all
The glow of general goodness they disturb?
— To make those very defects an endless source
Of new affection grown from hopes and fears?
And, when all fails, is there no gallant stand
Made even for much proved weak? no shrinking-back
Lest, since all love assimilates the soul
To what it loves, it should at length become
Almost a rival of its idol? Trust me,
If there be fiends who seek to work our hurt,
To ruin and drag down earth's mightiest spirits
Even at God's foot, 't will be from such as love,
Their zeal will gather most to serve their cause;
And least from those who hate, who most essay
By contumely and scorn to blot the light
Which forces entrance even to their hearts:
For thence will our defender tear the veil
And show within each heart, as in a shrine,
The giant image of perfection, grown
In hate's despite, whose calumnies were spawned
In the untroubled presence of its eyes.
True admiration blinds not; nor am I
So blind. I call your sin exceptional;
It springs from one whose life has passed the bounds
Prescribed to life. Compound that fault with God!
I speak of men; to common men like me

The weakness you reveal endears you more,
Like the far traces of decay in suns.
I bid you have good cheer!
Paracelsus. *Præclare! Optime!*
Think of a quiet mountain-cloistered priest
Instructing Paracelsus! yet 't is so.
Come, I will show you where my merit lies.
'T is in the advance of individual minds
That the slow crowd should ground their expectation
Eventually to follow; as the sea
Waits ages in its bed till some one wave
Out of the multitudinous mass, extends
The empire of the whole, some feet perhaps,
Over the strip of sand which could confine
Its fellows so long time: thenceforth the rest,
Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,
And so much is clear gained. I shall be glad
If all my labors, failing of aught else,
Suffice to make such inroad and procure
A wider range for thought: nay, they do this;
For, whatsoe'er my notions of true knowledge
And a legitimate success, may be,
I am not blind to my undoubted rank
When classed with others: I precede my age:
And whoso wills is very free to mount
These labors as a platform whence his own
May have a prosperous outset. But, alas!
My followers — they are noisy as you heard;
But, for intelligence, the best of them
So clumsily wield the weapons I supply
And they extol, that I begin to doubt
Whether their own rude clubs and pebble-stones
Would not do better service than my arms
Thus vilely swayed — if error will not fall

Sooner before the old awkward batterings
Than my more subtle warfare, not half learned.
Festus. I would supply that art, then, or withhold
New arms until you teach their mystery.
Paracelsus. Content you, 't is my wish; I have recourse
To the simplest training. Day by day I seek
To wake the mood, the spirit which alone
Can make those arms of any use to men.
Of course they are for swaggering forth at once
Graced with Ulysses' bow, Achilles' shield —
Flash on us, all in armor, thou Achilles!
Make our hearts dance to thy resounding step!
A proper sight to scare the crows away!
Festus. Pity you choose not then some other method
Of coming at your point. The marvellous art
At length established in the world bids fair
To remedy all hindrances like these:
Trust to Frobenius' press the precious lore
Obscured by uncouth manner, or unfit
For raw beginners; let his types secure
A deathless monument to after-time;
Meanwhile wait confidently and enjoy
The ultimate effect: sooner or later
You shall be all-revealed.
Paracelsus. The old dull question
In a new form; no more. Thus: I possess
Two sorts of knowledge; one, — vast, shadowy,
Hints of the unbounded aim I once pursued:
The other consists of many secrets, caught
While bent on nobler prize, — perhaps a few
Prime principles which may conduct to much:
These last I offer to my followers here.
Now, bid me chronicle the first of these,

My ancient study, and in effect you bid
Revert to the wild courses just abjured:
I must go find them scattered through the world.
Then, for the principles, they are so simple
(Being chiefly of the overturning sort),
That one time is as proper to propound them
As any other — to-morrow at my class,
Or half a century hence embalmed in print.
For if mankind intend to learn at all,
They must begin by giving faith to them
And acting on them: and I do not see
But that my lectures serve indifferent well:
No doubt these dogmas fall not to the earth,
For all their novelty and rugged setting.
I think my class will not forget the day
I let them know the gods of Israel,
Aëtius, Oribasius, Galen, Rhasis,
Serapion, Avicenna, Averröes,
Were blocks!

Festus. And that reminds me, I heard something
About your waywardness: you burned their books,
It seems, instead of answering those sages.

Paracelsus. And who said that?

Festus. Some I met yesternight
With Œcolampadius. As you know, the purpose
Of this short stay at Basil was to learn
His pleasure touching certain missives sent
For our Zuinglius and himself. 'T was he
Apprised me that the famous teacher here
Was my old friend.

Paracelsus. Ah, I forgot: you went . . .

Festus. From Zurich with advices for the ear
Of Luther, now at Wittenberg — (you know,
I make no doubt, the differences of late

With Carolostadius) — and returning sought
Basil and . . .
Paracelsus. I remember. Here 's a case, now,
Will teach you why I answer not, but burn
The books you mention. Pray, does Luther dream
His arguments convince by their own force
The crowds that own his doctrine? No, indeed!
His plain denial of established points
Ages had sanctified and men supposed
Could never be oppugned while earth was under
And heaven above them — points which chance or time
Affected not — did more than the array
Of argument which followed. Boldly deny!
There is much breath-stopping, hair-stiffening
Awhile; then, amazed glances, mute awaiting
The thunderbolt which does not come: and next,
Reproachful wonder and inquiry: those
Who else had never stirred, are able now
To find the rest out for themselves, perhaps
To outstrip him who set the whole at work,
— As never will my wise class its instructor.
And you saw Luther?
Festus. 'T is a wondrous soul!
Paracelsus. True: the so-heavy chain which galled
mankind
Is shattered, and the noblest of us all
Must bow to the deliverer — nay, the worker
Of our own project — we who long before
Had burst our trammels, but forgot the crowd,
We should have taught, still groaned beneath their
load:
This he has done and nobly. Speed that may!
Whatever be my chance or my mischance,
What benefits mankind must glad me too;

And men seem made, though not as I believed,
For something better than the times produce.
Witness these gangs of peasants your new lights
From Suabia have possessed, whom Münzer leads,
And whom the duke, the landgrave and the elector
Will calm in blood! Well, well; 't is not my world!

Festus. Hark!

Paracelsus. 'T is the melancholy wind astir
Within the trees; the embers too are gray:
Morn must be near.

Festus. Best ope the casement: see,
The night, late strewn with clouds and flying stars,
Is blank and motionless: how peaceful sleep
The tree-tops altogether! Like an asp,
The wind slips whispering from bough to bough.

Paracelsus. Ay; you would gaze on a wind-shaken tree
By the hour, nor count time lost.

Festus. So you shall gaze:
Those happy times will come again.

Paracelsus. Gone, gone,
Those pleasant times! Does not the moaning wind
Seem to bewail that we have gained such gains
And bartered sleep for them?

Festus. It is our trust
That there is yet another world to mend
All error and mischance.

Paracelsus. Another world!
And why this world, this common world, to be
A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair soever,
To some fine life to come? Man must be fed
With angels' food, forsooth; and some few traces
Of a diviner nature which look out
Through his corporeal baseness, warrant him

In a supreme contempt of all provision
For his inferior tastes — some straggling marks
Which constitute his essence, just as truly
As here and there a gem would constitute
The rock, their barren bed, one diamond.
But were it so — were man all mind — he gains
A station little enviable. From God
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,
Intelligence exists which casts our mind
Into immeasurable shade. No, no:
Love, hope, fear, faith — these make humanity;
These are its sign and note and character,
And these I have lost! — gone, shut from me forever,
Like a dead friend safe from unkindness more!
See, morn at length. The heavy darkness seems
Diluted, gray and clear without the stars;
The shrubs bestir and rouse themselves as if
Some snake, that weighed them down all night, let go
His hold; and from the East, fuller and fuller,
Day, like a mighty river, flowing in;
But clouded, wintry, desolate and cold.
Yet see how that broad prickly star-shaped plant,
Half-down in the crevice, spreads its woolly leaves
All thick and glistering with diamond dew.
And you depart for Einsiedeln this day,
And we have spent all night in talk like this!
If you would have me better for your love,
Revert no more to these sad themes.

Festus. One favor,
And I have done. I leave you, deeply moved;
Unwilling to have fared so well, the while
My friend has changed so sorely. If this mood
Shall pass away, if light once more arise
Where all is darkness now, if you see fit

To hope and trust again, and strive again,
You will remember — not our love alone —
But that my faith in God's desire that man
Should trust on his support, (as I must think
You trusted) is obscured and dim through you:
For you are thus, and this is no reward.
Will you not call me to your side, dear Aureole?

IV. — PARACELSUS ASPIRES.

SCENE. — *Colmar in Alsatia: an Inn.* 1528.

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Paracelsus [*to* JOHANNES OPORINUS, *his Secretary*]
Sic itur ad astra! Dear Von Visenburg
Is scandalized, and poor Torinus paralyzed,
And every honest soul that Basil holds
Aghast; and yet we live, as one may say,
Just as though Liechtenfels had never set
So true a value on his sorry carcass,
And learned Pütter had not frowned us dumb.
We live; and shall as surely start to-morrow
For Nuremberg, as we drink speedy scathe
To Basil in this mantling wine, suffused
A delicate blush, no fainter tinge is born
I' the shut heart of a bud. Pledge me, good John —
"Basil; a hot plague ravage it, and Pütter
Oppose the plague!" Even so? Do you too share
Their panic, the reptiles? Ha, ha; faint through these,
Desist for these! They manage matters so
At Basil, 't is like: but others may find means
To bring the stoutest braggart of the tribe

Once more to crouch in silence — means to breed
A stupid wonder in each fool again,
Now big with admiration at the skill
Which stript a vain pretender of his plumes:
And, that done, — means to brand each slavish brow
So deeply, surely, ineffaceably,
That henceforth flattery shall not pucker it
Out of the furrow; there that stamp shall stay
To show the next they fawn on, what they are,
This Basil with its magnates, — fill my cup, —
Whom I curse soul and limb. And now despatch,
Despatch, my trusty John; and what remains
To do, whate'er arrangements for our trip
Are yet to be completed, see you hasten
This night; we'll weather the storm at least: to-
morrow
For Nuremberg! Now leave us; this grave clerk
Has divers weighty matters for my ear:
[Oporinus *goes out.*
And spare my lungs. At last, my gallant Festus,
I am rid of this arch-knave that dogs my heels
As a gaunt crow a gasping sheep; at last
May give a loose to my delight. How kind,
How very kind, my first best only friend!
Why, this looks like fidelity. Embrace me!
Not a hair silvered yet? Right! you shall live
Till I am worth your love; you shall be proud,
And I — but let time show! Did you not wonder?
I sent to you because our compact weighed
Upon my conscience — (you recall the night
At Basil, which the gods confound!) — because
Once more I aspire. I call you to my side:
You come. You thought my message strange?

Festus. So strange

That I must hope, indeed, your messenger
Has mingled his own fancies with the words
Purporting to be yours.
Paracelsus. He said no more,
'T is probable, than the precious folk I leave
Said fiftyfold more roughly. Well-a-day,
'T is true! poor Paracelsus is exposed
At last; a most egregious quack he proves:
And those he overreached must spit their hate
On one who, utterly beneath contempt,
Could yet deceive their topping wits. You heard
Bare truth; and at my bidding you come here
To speed me on my enterprise, as once
Your lavish wishes sped me, my own friend!
Festus. What is your purpose, Aureole?
Paracelsus. Oh, for purpose,
There is no lack of precedents in a case
Like mine; at least, if not precisely mine,
The case of men cast off by those they sought
To benefit.
Festus. They really cast you off?
I only heard a vague tale of some priest,
Cured by your skill, who wrangled at your claim,
Knowing his life's worth best; and how the judge
The matter was referred to, saw no cause
To interfere, nor you to hide your full
Contempt of him; nor he, again, to smother
His wrath thereat, which raised so fierce a flame
That Basil soon was made no place for you.
Paracelsus. The affair of Liechtenfels? the shallowest fable,
The last and silliest outrage — mere pretence!
I knew it, I foretold it from the first,
How soon the stupid wonder you mistook

For genuine loyalty — a cheering promise
Of better things to come — would pall and pass;
And every word comes true. Saul is among
The prophets! Just so long as I was pleased
To play off the mere antics of my art,
Fantastic gambols leading to no end,
I got huge praise: but one can ne'er keep down
Our foolish nature's weakness. There they flocked,
Poor devils, jostling, swearing and perspiring,
Till the walls rang again; and all for me!
I had a kindness for them, which was right;
But then I stopped not till I tacked to that
A trust in them and a respect — a sort
Of sympathy for them; I must needs begin
To teach them, not amaze them, "to impart
The spirit which should instigate the search
Of truth," just what you bade me! I spoke out.
Forthwith a mighty squadron, in disgust,
Filed off — "the sifted chaff of the sack," I said,
Redoubling my endeavors to secure
The rest. When lo! one man had tarried so long
Only to ascertain if I supported
This tenet of his, or that; another loved
To hear impartially before he judged,
And having heard, now judged; this bland disciple
Passed for my dupe, but all along, it seems,
Spied error where his neighbors marvelled most:
That fiery doctor who had hailed me friend,
Did it because my by-paths, once proved wrong
And beaconed properly, would commend again
The good old ways our sires jogged safely o'er,
Though not their squeamish sons; the other worthy
Discovered divers verses of St. John,
Which, read successively, refreshed the soul,

But, muttered backwards, cured the gout, the stone,
The colic and what not. *Quid multa?* The end
Was a clear class-room, and a quiet leer
From grave folk, and a sour reproachful glance
From those in chief who, cap in hand, installed
The new professor scarce a year before;
And a vast flourish about patient merit
Obscured awhile by flashy tricks, but sure
Sooner or later to emerge in splendor —
Of which the example was some luckless wight
Whom my arrival had discomfited,
But now, it seems, the general voice recalled
To fill my chair and so efface the stain
Basil had long incurred. I sought no better,
Only a quiet dismissal from my post,
And from my heart I wished them better suited
And better served. Good night to Basil, then!
But fast as I proposed to rid the tribe
Of my obnoxious back, I could not spare them
The pleasure of a parting kick.

Festus. You smile:
Despise them as they merit!

Paracelsus. If I smile,
'T is with as very contempt as ever turned
Flesh into stone. This courteous recompense,
This grateful . . . Festus, were your nature fit
To be defiled, your eyes the eyes to ache
At gangrene-blotches, eating poison-blains,
The ulcerous barky scurf of leprosy
Which finds — a man, and leaves — a hideous thing
That cannot but be mended by hell fire,
— I would lay bare to you the human heart
Which God cursed long ago, and devils make since
Their pet nest and their never-tiring home.

Oh, sages have discovered we are born
For various ends — to love, to know : has ever
One stumbled, in his search, on any signs
Of a nature in us formed to hate ? To hate ?
If that be our true object which evokes
Our powers in fullest strength, be sure 't is hate !
Yet men have doubted if the best and bravest
Of spirits can nourish him with hate alone.
I had not the monopoly of fools,
It seems, at Basil.

Festus. But your plans, your plans !
I have yet to learn your purpose, Aureole !

Paracelsus. Whether to sink beneath such ponderous shame,
To shrink up like a crushed snail, undergo
In silence and desist from further toil,
And so subside into a monument
Of one their censure blasted ? or to bow
Cheerfully as submissively, to lower
My old pretensions even as Basil dictates,
To drop into the rank her wits assign me
And live as they prescribe, and make that use
Of my poor knowledge which their rules allow,
Proud to be patted now and then, and careful
To practise the true posture for receiving
The amplest benefit from their hoofs' appliance
When they shall condescend to tutor me ?
Then, one may feel resentment like a flame
Within, and deck false systems in truth's garb,
And tangle and entwine mankind with error,
And give them darkness for a dower and falsehood
For a possession, ages : or one may mope
Into a shade through thinking, or else drowse
Into a dreamless sleep and so die off.

But I, — now Festus shall divine! — but I
Am merely setting out once more, embracing
My earliest aims again! What thinks he now?
Festus. Your aims? the aims? — to Know? and where is found
The early trust . . .
Paracelsus. Nay, not so fast; I say,
The aims — not the old means. You know they made me
A laughing-stock; I was a fool; you know
The when and the how: hardly those means again!
Not but they had their beauty; who should know
Their passing beauty, if not I? Still, dreams
They were, so let them vanish, yet in beauty
If that may be. Stay: thus they pass in song!

[*He sings.*

Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair: such balsam falls
Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

Mine, every word! And on such pile shall die
My lovely fancies, with fair perished things,
Themselves fair and forgotten; yes, forgotten,
Or why abjure them? So, I made this rhyme
That fitting dignity might be preserved;
No little proud was I; though the list of drugs
Smacks of my old vocation, and the verse
Halts like the best of Luther's psalms.

Festus. But, Aureole,
Talk not thus wildly and madly. I am here —
Did you know all! I have travelled far, indeed,
To learn your wishes. Be yourself again!
For in this mood I recognize you less
Than in the horrible despondency
I witnessed last. You may account this, joy;
But rather let me gaze on that despair
Than hear these incoherent words and see
This flushed cheek and intensely-sparkling eye.

Paracelsus. Why, man, I was light-hearted in my prime,
I am light-hearted now; what would you have?
Aprile was a poet, I make songs —
'T is the very augury of success I want!
Why should I not be joyous now as then?

Festus. Joyous! and how? and what remains for joy?
You have declared the ends (which I am sick
Of naming) are impracticable.

Paracelsus. Ay,
Pursued as I pursued them — the arch-fool!
Listen: my plan will please you not, 't is like,
But you are little versed in the world's ways.
This is my plan — (first drinking its good luck) —
I will accept all helps; all I despised

So rashly at the outset, equally
With early impulses, late years have quenched:
I have tried each way singly: now for both!
All helps! no one sort shall exclude the rest.
I seek to know and to enjoy at once,
Not one without the other as before.
Suppose my labor should seem God's own cause
Once more, as first I dreamed, — it shall not balk me
Of the meanest earthliest sensualest delight
That may be snatched; for every joy is gain,
And gain is gain, however small. My soul
Can die then, nor be taunted — "what was gained?"
Nor, on the other hand, should pleasure follow
As though I had not spurned her hitherto,
Shall she o'ercloud my spirit's rapt communion
With the tumultuous past, the teeming future,
Glorious with visions of a full success.

Festus. Success!

Paracelsus. And wherefore not? Why not prefer
Results obtained in my best state of being,
To those derived alone from seasons dark
As the thoughts they bred? When I was best, my youth
Unwasted, seemed success not surest too?
It is the nature of darkness to obscure.
I am a wanderer: I remember well
One journey, how I feared the track was missed,
So long the city I desired to reach
Lay hid; when suddenly its spires afar
Flashed through the circling clouds; you may conceive
My transport. Soon the vapors closed again,
But I had seen the city, and one such glance
No darkness could obscure: nor shall the present —
A few dull hours, a passing shame or two,

Destroy the vivid memories of the past.
I will fight the battle out ; a little spent
Perhaps, but still an able combatant.
You look at my gray hair and furrowed brow ?
But I can turn even weakness to account :
Of many tricks I know, 't is not the least
To push the ruins of my frame, whereon
The fire of vigor trembles scarce alive,
Into a heap, and send the flame aloft.
What should I do with age ? So, sickness lends
An aid ; it being, I fear, the source of all
We boast of : mind is nothing but disease,
And natural health is ignorance.
Festus. I see
But one good symptom in this notable scheme.
I feared your sudden journey had in view
To wreak immediate vengeance on your foes.
'T is not so : I am glad.
Paracelsus. And if I please
To spit on them, to trample them, what then ?
'T is sorry warfare truly, but the fools
Provoke it. I would spare their self-conceit,
But if they must provoke me, cannot suffer
Forbearance on my part, if I may keep
No quality in the shade, must needs put forth
Power to match power, my strength against their strength,
And teach them their own game with their own arms —
Why, be it so and let them take their chance !
I am above them like a god, there 's no
Hiding the fact : what idle scruples, then,
Were those that ever bade me soften it,
Communicate it gently to the world,

Instead of proving my supremacy,
Taking my natural station o'er their head,
Then owning all the glory was a man's!
— And in my elevation man's would be.
But live and learn, though life 's short, learning, hard!
And therefore, though the wreck of my past self,
I fear, dear Pütter, that your lecture-room
Must wait awhile for its best ornament,
The penitent empiric, who set up
For somebody, but soon was taught his place;
Now, but too happy to be let confess
His error, snuff the candles, and illustrate
(*Fiat experientia corpore vili*)
Your medicine's soundness in his person. Wait,
Good Pütter!

Festus. He who sneers thus, is a god!

Paracelsus. Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am very glad
You are not gulled by all this swaggering; you
Can see the root of the matter! — how I strive
To put a good face on the overthrow
I have experienced, and to bury and hide
My degradation in its length and breadth;
How the mean motives I would make you think
Just mingle as is due with nobler aims,
The appetites I modestly allow
May influence me as being mortal still —
Do goad me, drive me on, and fast supplant
My youth's desires. You are no stupid dupe:
You find me out! Yes, I had sent for you
To palm these childish lies upon you, Festus!
Laugh — you shall laugh at me!

Festus. The past, then, Aureole,
Proves nothing? Is our interchange of love
Yet to begin? Have I to swear I mean

No flattery in this speech or that? For you,
Whate'er you say, there is no degradation;
These low thoughts are no inmates of your mind,
Or wherefore this disorder? You are vexed
As much by the intrusion of base views,
Familiar to your adversaries, as they
Were troubled should your qualities alight
Amid their murky souls; not otherwise,
A stray wolf which the winter forces down
From our bleak hills, suffices to affright
A village in the vales — while foresters
Sleep calm, though all night long the famished troop
Snuff round and scratch against their crazy huts.
These evil thoughts are monsters, and will flee.

Paracelsus. May you be happy, Festus, my own friend!

Festus. Nay, further; the delights you fain would think
The superseders of your nobler aims,
Though ordinary and harmless stimulants,
Will ne'er content you. . . .

Paracelsus. Hush! I once despised them,
But that soon passes. We are high at first
In our demand, nor will abate a jot
Of toil's strict value; but time passes o'er,
And humbler spirits accept what we refuse:
In short, when some such comfort is doled out
As these delights, we cannot long retain
Bitter contempt which urges us at first
To hurl it back, but hug it to our breast
And thankfully retire. This life of mine
Must be lived out and a grave thoroughly earned:
I am just fit for that and naught beside.
I told you once, I cannot now enjoy,

Unless I deem my knowledge gains through joy;
Nor can I know, but straight warm tears reveal
My need of linking also joy to knowledge:
So, on I drive, enjoying all I can,
And knowing all I can. I speak, of course,
Confusedly; this will better explain — feel here!
Quick beating, is it not? — a fire of the heart
To work off some way, this as well as any.
So, Festus sees me fairly launched; his calm
Compassionate look might have disturbed me once,
But now, far from rejecting, I invite
What bids me press the closer, lay myself
Open before him, and be soothed with pity;
I hope, if he command hope, and believe
As he directs me — satiating myself
With his enduring love. And Festus quits me
To give place to some credulous disciple
Who holds that God is wise, but Paracelsus
Has his peculiar merits: I suck in
That homage, chuckle o'er that admiration,
And then dismiss the fool; for night is come,
And I betake myself to study again,
Till patient searchings after hidden lore
Half wring some bright truth from its prison; my frame
Trembles, my forehead's veins swell out, my hair
Tingles for triumph. Slow and sure the morn
Shall break on my pent room and dwindling lamp
And furnace dead, and scattered earths and ores;
When, with a failing heart and throbbing brow,
I must review my captured truth, sum up
Its value, trace what ends to what begins,
Its present power with its eventual bearings,
Latent affinities, the views it opens,

And its full length in perfecting my scheme.
I view it sternly circumscribed, cast down
From the high place my fond hopes yielded it,
Proved worthless — which, in getting, yet had cost
Another wrench to this fast-falling frame.
Then, quick, the cup to quaff, that chases sorrow!
I lapse back into youth, and take again
My fluttering pulse for evidence that God
Means good to me, will make my cause his own.
See! I have cast off this remorseless care
Which clogged a spirit born to soar so free,
And my dim chamber has become a tent,
Festus is sitting by me, and his Michal . . .
Why do you start? I say, she listening here,
(For yonder — Würzburg through the orchard-bough!)
Motions as though such ardent words should find
No echo in a maiden's quiet soul,
But her pure bosom heaves, her eyes fill fast
With tears, her sweet lips tremble all the while!
Ha, ha!

Festus. It seems, then, you expect to reap
No unreal joy from this your present course,
But rather . . .

Paracelsus. Death! To die! I owe that much
To what, at least, I was. I should be sad
To live contented after such a fall,
To thrive and fatten after such reverse!
The whole plan is a makeshift, but will last
My time.

Festus. And you have never mused and said,
"I had a noble purpose, and the strength
To compass it; but I have stopped half-way,
And wrongly given the first-fruits of my toil
To objects little worthy of the gift.

Why linger round them still? why clench my fault?
Why seek for consolation in defeat,
In vain endeavors to derive a beauty
From ugliness? why seek to make the most
Of what no power can change, nor strive instead
With mighty effort to redeem the past
And, gathering up the treasures thus cast down,
To hold a steadfast course till I arrive
At their fit destination and my own?"
You have never pondered thus?

Paracelsus. Have I, you ask,
Often at midnight, when most fancies come,
Would some such airy project visit me:
But ever at the end . . . or will you hear
The same thing in a tale, a parable?
You and I, wandering over the world wide,
Chance to set foot upon a desert coast.
Just as we cry, "No human voice before
Broke the inveterate silence of these rocks!"
— Their querulous echo startles us; we turn:
What ravaged structure still looks o'er the sea?
Some characters remain, too! While we read,
The sharp salt wind, impatient for the last
Of even this record, wistfully comes and goes,
Or sings what we recover, mocking it.
This is the record; and my voice, the wind's.

[*He sings.*]

Over the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave,
A gallant armament:
Each bark built out of a forest-tree
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,

Within and without, with black bull-hides.
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game :
So, each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,
  But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,
And an awning drooped the mast below,
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor starshine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,
  Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar ;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore ;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,
We, the voyagers from afar,
  Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
  And with light and perfume, music too :
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past,
And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now, one morn, land appeared — a speck
  Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky :
" Avoid it," cried our pilot, " check

The shout, restrain the eager eye!"
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;
So, we broke the cedar pales away,
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
And a statue bright was on every deck!
We shouted, every man of us,
And steered right into the harbor thus,
With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!
All day we built its shrine for each,
A shrine of rock for every one,
Nor paused till in the westering sun
We sat together on the beach
To sing because our task was done.
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
What laughter all the distance stirs!
A loaded raft with happy throngs
Of gentle islanders!
"Our isles are just at hand," they cried,
"Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;
Our temple-gates are opened wide,
Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
For these majestic forms" — they cried.
Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
From our deep dream, and knew, too late,
How bare the rock, how desolate,
Which had received our precious freight:
Yet we called out — "Depart!
Our gifts, once given, must here abide.
Our work is done; we have no heart
To mar our work," — we cried.

Festus. In truth ?

Paracelsus. Nay, wait : all this in tracings faint
On rugged stones strewn here and there, but piled
In order once : then follows — mark what follows !
"The sad rhyme of the men who proudly clung
To their first fault, and withered in their pride."

Festus. Come back then, Aureole ; as you fear God, come !
This is foul sin ; come back ! Renounce the past,
Forswear the future ; look for joy no more,
But wait death's summons amid holy sights,
And trust me for the event — peace, if not joy.
Return with me to Einsiedeln, dear Aureole !

Paracelsus. No way, no way ! it would not turn to good.
A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss —
'T is well for him ; but when a sinful man,
Envying such slumber, may desire to put
His guilt away, shall he return at once
To rest by lying there ? Our sires knew well
(Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons)
The fitting course for such : dark cells, dim lamps,
A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm :
No mossy pillow blue with violets !

Festus. I see no symptom of these absolute
And tyrannous passions. You are calmer now.
This verse-making can purge you well enough
Without the terrible penance you describe.
You love me still : the lusts you fear will never
Outrage your friend. To Einsiedeln, once more !
Say but the word !

Paracelsus. No, no ; those lusts forbid :
They crouch, I know, cowering with half-shut eye
Beside you ; 't is their nature. Thrust yourself

Between them and their prey; let some fool style me
Or king or quack, it matters not — then try
Your wisdom, urge them to forego their treat!
No, no; learn better and look deeper, Festus!
If you knew how a devil sneers within me
While you are talking now of this, now that,
As though we differed scarcely save in trifles!
Festus. Do we so differ? True, change must proceed,
Whether for good or ill; keep from me, which!
Do not confide all secrets: I was born
To hope, and you . . .
Paracelsus. To trust: you know the fruits!
Festus. Listen: I do believe, what you call trust
Was self-delusion at the best: for, see!
So long as God would kindly pioneer
A path for you, and screen you from the world,
Procure you full exemption from man's lot,
Man's common hopes and fears, on the mere pretext
Of your engagement in his service — yield you
A limitless license, make you God, in fact,
And turn your slave — you were content to say
Most courtly praises! What is it, at last,
But selfishness without example? None
Could trace God's will so plain as you, while yours
Remained implied in it; but now you fail,
And we, who prate about that will, are fools!
In short, God's service is established here
As he determines fit, and not your way,
And this you cannot brook. Such discontent
Is weak. Renounce all creatureship at once!
Affirm an absolute right to have and use
Your energies; as though the rivers should say —
"We rush to the ocean; what have we to do

With feeding streamlets, lingering in the vales,
Sleeping in lazy pools?" Set up that plea,
That will be bold at least!

Paracelsus. 'T is like enough.
The serviceable spirits are those, no doubt,
The East produces: lo, the master bids, —
They wake, raise terraces and garden-grounds
In one night's space; and, this done, straight begin
Another century's sleep, to the great praise
Of him that framed them wise and beautiful,
Till a lamp's rubbing, or some chance akin,
Wake them again. I am of different mould.
I would have soothed my lord, and slaved for him
And done him service past my narrow bond
And thus I get rewarded for my pains!
Beside, 't is vain to talk of forwarding
God's glory otherwise; this is alone
The sphere of its increase, as far as men
Increase it; why, then, look beyond this sphere?
We are his glory; and if we be glorious,
Is not the thing achieved?

Festus. Shall one like me
Judge hearts like yours? Though years have changed you much,
And you have left your first love, and retain
Its empty shade to veil your crooked ways,
Yet I still hold that you have honored God.
And who shall call your course without reward?
For, wherefore this repining at defeat
Had triumph ne'er inured you to high hopes?
I urge you to forsake the life you curse,
And what success attends me? — simply talk
Of passion, weakness and remorse; in short,
Anything but the naked truth — you choose

This so-despised career, and cheaply hold
My happiness, or rather other men's.
Once more, return!
Paracelsus. And quickly. John the thief
Has pilfered half my secrets by this time:
And we depart by daybreak. I am weary,
I know not how; not even the wine-cup soothes
My brain to-night . . .
Do you not thoroughly despise me, Festus?
No flattery! One like you needs not be told
We live and breathe deceiving and deceived.
Do you not scorn me from your heart of hearts,
Me and my cant, each petty subterfuge,
My rhymes and all this frothy shower of words,
My glozing self-deceit, my outward crust
Of lies which wrap, as tetter, morphew, furfair
Wrapt the sound flesh? — so, see you flatter not!
Even God flatters: but my friend, at least,
Is true. I would depart, secure henceforth
Against all further insult, hate and wrong
From puny foes; my one friend's scorn shall brand me:
No fear of sinking deeper!
Festus. No, dear Aureole!
No, no; I came to counsel faithfully.
There are old rules, made long ere we were born,
By which I judge you. I, so fallible,
So infinitely low beside your mighty
Majestic spirit! — even I can see
You own some higher law than ours which call
Sin, what is no sin — weakness, what is strength.
But I have only these, such as they are,
To guide me; and I blame you where they bid,
Only so long as blaming promises

To win peace for your soul: the more, that sorrow
Has fallen on me of late, and they have helped me
So that I faint not under my distress.
But wherefore should I scruple to avow
In spite of all, as brother judging brother,
Your fate is most inexplicable to me?
And should you perish without recompense
And satisfaction yet — too hastily
I have relied on love: you may have sinned,
But you have loved. As a mere human matter —
As I would have God deal with fragile men
In the end — I say that you will triumph yet!

Paracelsus. Have you felt sorrow, Festus? — 't is because
You love me. Sorrow, and sweet Michal yours!
Well thought on: never let her know this last
Dull winding-up of all: these miscreants dared
Insult me — me she loved: — so, grieve her not!

Festus. Your ill success can little grieve her now.

Paracelsus. Michal is dead! pray Christ we do not craze!

Festus. Aureole, dear Aureole, look not on me thus!
Fool, fool! this is the heart grown sorrow-proof —
I cannot bear those eyes.

Paracelsus. Nay, really dead?

Festus. 'T is scarce a month.

Paracelsus. Stone dead! — then you have laid her
Among the flowers ere this. Now, do you know,
I can reveal a secret which shall comfort
Even you. I have no julep, as men think,
To cheat the grave; but a far better secret.
Know, then, you did not ill to trust your love
To the cold earth: I have thought much of it:
For I believe we do not wholly die.

Festus. Aureole!

Paracelsus. Nay, do not laugh; there is a reason
For what I say: I think the soul can never
Taste death. I am, just now, as you may see,
Very unfit to put so strange a thought
In an intelligible dress of words;
But take it as my trust, she is not dead.

Festus. But not on this account alone? you surely,
— Aureole, you have believed this all along?

Paracelsus. And Michal sleeps among the roots and dews,
While I am moved at Basil, and full of schemes
For Nuremberg, and hoping and despairing,
As though it mattered how the farce plays out,
So it be quickly played. Away, away!
Have your will, rabble! while we fight the prize,
Troop you in safety to the snug back-seats
And leave a clear arena for the brave
About to perish for your sport! — Behold!

V. — PARACELSUS ATTAINS.

Scene. — *Salzburg; a cell in the Hospital of St. Sebastian.* 1541.

Festus, Paracelsus.

Festus. No change! The weary night is well-nigh spent,
The lamp burns low, and through the casement-bars
Gray morning glimmers feebly: yet no change!
Another night, and still no sigh has stirred
That fallen discolored mouth, no pang relit
Those fixed eyes, quenched by the decaying body,

Like torch-flame choked in dust. While all beside
Was breaking, to the last they held out bright,
As a stronghold where life intrenched itself;
But they are dead now — very blind and dead:
He will drowse into death without a groan.

My Aureole — my forgotten, ruined Aureole!
The days are gone, are gone! How grand thou wast!
And now not one of those who struck thee down —
Poor glorious spirit — concerns him even to stay
And satisfy himself his little hand
Could turn God's image to a livid thing.

Another night, and yet no change! 'T is much
That I should sit by him, and bathe his brow,
And chafe his hands; 'tis much: but he will sure
Know me, and look on me, and speak to me
Once more — but only once! His hollow cheek
Looked all night long as though a creeping laugh
At his own state were just about to break
From the dying man: my brain swam, my throat swelled,
And yet I could not turn away. In truth,
They told me how, when first brought here, he seemed
Resolved to live, to lose no faculty;
Thus striving to keep up his shattered strength,
Until they bore him to this stifling cell:
When straight his features fell, an hour made white
The flushed face, and relaxed the quivering limb,
Only the eye remained intense awhile
As though it recognized the tomb-like place,
And then he lay as here he lies.
Ay, here!
Here is earth's noblest, nobly garlanded —
Her bravest champion with his well-won prize —

Her best achievement, her sublime amends
For countless generations fleeting fast
And followed by no trace; — the creature-god
She instances when angels would dispute
The title of her brood to rank with them.
Angels, this is our angel! Those bright forms
We clothe with purple, crown and call to thrones,
Are human, but not his; those are but men
Whom other men press round and kneel before;
Those palaces are dwelt in by mankind;
Higher provision is for him you seek
Amid our pomps and glories: see it here!
Behold earth's paragon! Now, raise thee, clay!

God! Thou art love! I build my faith on that.
Even as I watch beside thy tortured child
Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast by him,
So doth thy right hand guide us through the world
Wherein we stumble. God! what shall we say?
How has he sinned? How else should he have done?
Surely he sought thy praise — thy praise, for all
He might be busied by the task so much
As half forget awhile its proper end.
Dost thou well, Lord? Thou canst not but prefer
That I should range myself upon his side —
How could he stop at every step to set
Thy glory forth? Hadst thou but granted him
Success, thy honor would have crowned success,
A halo round a star. Or, say he erred, —
Save him, dear God; it will be like thee: bathe him
In light and life! Thou art not made like us;
We should be wroth in such a case; but thou
Forgivest — so, forgive these passionate thoughts
Which come unsought and will not pass away!

I know thee, who hast kept my path, and made
Light for me in the darkness, tempering sorrow
So that it reached me like a solemn joy;
It were too strange that I should doubt thy love.
But what am I? Thou madest him and knowest
How he was fashioned. I could never err
That way: the quiet place beside thy feet,
Reserved for me, was ever in my thoughts:
But he — thou shouldst have favored him as well!

Ah! he wakens! Aureole, I am here. 'tis Festus!
I cast away all wishes save one wish —
Let him but know me, only speak to me!
He mutters; louder and louder; any other
Than I, with brain less laden, could collect
What he pours forth. Dear Aureole, do but look!
Is it talking or singing, this he utters fast?
Misery that he should fix me with his eye,
Quick talking to some other all the while!
If he would husband this wild vehemence
Which frustrates its intent! — I heard, I know
I heard my name amid those rapid words.
Oh, he will know me yet! Could I divert
This current, lead it somehow gently back
Into the channels of the past! — His eye
Brighter than ever! It must recognize me!

I am Erasmus: I am here to pray
That Paracelsus use his skill for me.
The schools of Paris and of Padua send
These questions for your learning to resolve.
We are your students, noble master: leave
This wretched cell, what business have you here?
Our class awaits you; come to us once more!
(O agony! the utmost I can do

Touches him not; how else arrest his ear?)
I am commissioned . . . I shall craze like him.
Better be mute and see what God shall send.
Paracelsus. Stay, stay with me!
Festus. I will; I am come here
To stay with you — Festus, you loved of old;
Festus, you know, you must know!
Paracelsus. Festus! Where's
Aprile, then? Has he not chanted softly
The melodies I heard all night? I could not
Get to him for a cold hand on my breast,
But I made out his music well enough,
O well enough! If they have filled him full
With magical music, as they freight a star
With light, and have remitted all his sin,
They will forgive me too, I too shall know!
Festus. Festus, your Festus!
Paracelsus. Ask him if Aprile
Knows as he Loves — if I shall Love and Know?
I try; but that cold hand, like lead — so cold!
Festus. My hand, see!
Paracelsus. Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile!
We get so near — so very, very near!
'T is an old tale: Jove strikes the Titans down,
Not when they set about their mountain-piling
But when another rock would crown the work.
And Phaeton — doubtless his first radiant plunge
Astonished mortals, though the gods were calm,
And Jove prepared his thunder: all old tales!
Festus. And what are these to you?
Paracelsus. Ay, fiends must laugh
So cruelly, so well! most like I never
Could tread a single pleasure underfoot,
But they were grinning by my side, were chuckling

To see me toil and drop away by flakes!
Hell-spawn! I am glad, most glad, that thus I fail!
Your cunning has o'ershot its aim. One year,
One month, perhaps, and I had served your turn!
You should have curbed your spite awhile. But now,
Who will believe 't was you that held me back?
Listen: there 's shame and hissing and contempt,
And none but laughs who names me, none but spits
Measureless scorn upon me, me alone,
The quack, the cheat, the liar, — all on me!
And thus your famous plan to sink mankind
In silence and despair, by teaching them
One of their race had probed the inmost truth,
Had done all man could do, yet failed no less —
Your wise plan proves abortive. Men despair?
Ha, ha! why, they are hooting the empiric,
The ignorant and incapable fool who rushed
Madly upon a work beyond his wits;
Nor doubt they but the simplest of themselves
Could bring the matter to triumphant issue.
So, pick and choose among them all, accursed!
Try now, persuade some other to slave for you,
To ruin body and soul to work your ends!
No, no; I am the first and last, I think.

Festus. Dear friend, who are accursed? who has done . . .

Paracelsus. What have I done? Fiends dare ask that? or you,
Brave men? Oh, you can chime in boldly, backed
By the others! What had you to do, sage peers?
Here stand my rivals; Latin, Arab, Jew,
Greek, join dead hands against me: all I ask
Is, that the world enroll my name with theirs,
And even this poor privilege, it seems,

They range themselves, prepared to disallow.
Only observe! why, fiends may learn from them!
How they talk calmly of my throes, my fierce
Aspirings, terrible watchings, each one claiming
Its price of blood and brain; how they dissect
And sneeringly disparage the few truths
Got at a life's cost; they too hanging the while
About my neck, their lies misleading me
And their dead names browbeating me! Gray crew,
Yet steeped in fresh malevolence from hell,
Is there a reason for your hate? My truths
Have shaken a little the palm about each prince?
Just think, Aprile, all these leering dotards
Were bent on nothing less than to be crowned
As we! That yellow blear-eyed wretch in chie.
To whom the rest cringe low with feigned respect,
Galen of Pergamos and hell — nay speak
The tale, old man! We met there face to face:
I said the crown should fall from thee. Once more
We meet as in that ghastly vestibule:
Look to my brow! Have I redeemed my pledge?
Festus. Peace, peace; ah, see!
Paracelsus. Oh, emptiness of fame!
Oh Persic Zoroaster, lord of stars!
— Who said these old renowns, dead long ago,
Could make me overlook the living world
To gaze through gloom at where they stood, indeed,
But stand no longer? What a warm light life
After the shade! In truth, my delicate witch,
My serpent-queen, you did but well to hide
The juggles I had else detected. Fire
May well run harmless o'er a breast like yours!
The cave was not so darkened by the smoke
But that your white limbs dazzled me: oh, white,

And panting as they twinkled, wildly dancing!
I cared not for your passionate gestures then,
But now I have forgotten the charm of charms,
The foolish knowledge which I came to seek,
While I remember that quaint dance; and thus
I am come back, not for those mummeries,
But to love you, and to kiss your little feet
Soft as an ermine's winter coat!

Festus. A light
Will struggle through these thronging words at last.
As in the angry and tumultuous West
A soft star trembles through the drifting clouds.
These are the strivings of a spirit which hates
So sad a vault should coop it, and calls up
The past to stand between it and its fate.
Were he at Einsiedeln — or Michal here!

Paracelsus. Cruel! I seek her now — I kneel — I shriek —
I clasp her vesture — but she fades, still fades;
And she is gone; sweet human love is gone!
'T is only when they spring to heaven that angels
Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day
Beside you, and lie down at night by you
Who care not for their presence, muse or sleep,
And all at once they leave you, and you know them!
We are so fooled, so cheated! Why, even now
I am not too secure against foul play;
The shadows deepen and the walls contract:
No doubt some treachery is going on.
'T is very dusk. Where are we put, Aprile?
Have they left us in the lurch? This murky loathsome
Death-trap, this slaughter-house, is not the hall
In the golden city! Keep by me, Aprile!
There is a hand groping amid the blackness

To catch us. Have the spider-fingers got you,
Poet? Hold on me for your life! If once
They pull you! — Hold!
'T is but a dream — no more!
I have you still; the sun comes out again;
Let us be happy: all will yet go well!
Let us confer: is it not like, Aprile,
That spite of trouble, this ordeal passed,
The value of my labors ascertained,
Just as some stream foams long among the rocks
But after glideth glassy to the sea,
So, full content shall henceforth be my lot?
What think you, poet? Louder! Your clear voice
Vibrates too like a harp-string. Do you ask
How could I still remain on earth, should God
Grant me the great approval which I seek?
I, you, and God can comprehend each other,
But men would murmur, and with cause enough;
For when they saw me, stainless of all sin,
Preserved and sanctified by inward light,
They would complain that comfort, shut from them,
I drank thus unespied; that they live on, -
Nor taste the quiet of a constant joy,
For ache and care and doubt and weariness,
While I am calm; help being vouchsafed to me,
And hid from them. — 'T were best consider that!
You reason well, Aprile; but at least
Let me know this, and die! Is this too much?
I will learn this, if God so please, and die!

If thou shalt please, dear God, if thou shalt please!
We are so weak, we know our motives least
In their confused beginning. If at first
I sought . . . but wherefore bare my heart to thee?

I know thy mercy ; and already thoughts
Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,
And intimate I cannot wholly fail,
For love and praise would clasp me willingly
Could I resolve to seek them. Thou art good,
And I should be content. Yet — yet first show
I have done wrong in daring! Rather give
The supernatural consciousness of strength
Which fed my youth ! Only one hour of that
With thee to help — O what should bar me then!

Lost, lost ! Thus things are ordered here ! God's creatures,
And yet he takes no pride in us ! — none, none !
Truly there needs another life to come !
If this be all — (I must tell Festus that)
And other life await us not — for one,
I say 't is a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
A wretched failure. I, for one, protest
Against it, and I hurl it back with scorn.

Well, onward though alone ! Small time remains,
And much to do : I must have fruit, must reap
Some profit from my toils. I doubt my body
Will hardly serve me through ; while I have labored
It has decayed ; and now that I demand
Its best assistance, it will crumble fast :
A sad thought, a sad fate ! How very full
Of wormwood 't is, that just at altar-service,
The rapt hymn rising with the rolling smoke,
When glory dawns and all is at the best,
The sacred fire may flicker and grow faint
And die for want of a wood-piler's help !
Thus fades the flagging body, and the soul
Is pulled down in the overthrow. Well, well —

Let men catch every word, let them lose naught
Of what I say ; something may yet be done.

They are ruins ! Trust me who am one of you !
All ruins, glorious once, but lonely now.
It makes my heart sick to behold you crouch
Beside your desolate fane : the arches dim,
The crumbling columns grand against the moon,
Could I but rear them up once more — but that
May never be, so leave them ! Trust me, friends,
Why should you linger here when I have built
A far resplendent temple, all your own ?
Trust me, they are but ruins ! See, Aprile,
Men will not heed ! Yet were I not prepared
With better refuge for them, tongue of mine
Should ne'er reveal how blank their dwelling is :
I would sit down in silence with the rest.

Ha, what ? you spit at me, you grin and shriek
Contempt into my ear — my ear which drank
God's accents once ? you curse me ? Why men, men,
I am not formed for it ! Those hideous eyes
Will be before me sleeping, waking, praying,
They will not let me even die. Spare, spare me,
Sinning or no, forget that, only spare me
The horrible scorn ! You thought I could support it.
But now you see what silly fragile creature
Cowers thus. I am not good nor bad enough,
Not Christ nor Cain, yet even Cain was saved
From Hate like this. Let me but totter back !
Perhaps I shall elude those jeers which creep
Into my very brain, and shut these scorched
Eyelids and keep those mocking faces out.

Listen, Aprile! I am very calm:
Be not deceived, there is no passion here
Where the blood leaps like an imprisoned thing:
I am calm: I will exterminate the race!
Enough of that: 't is said and it shall be.
And now be merry: safe and sound am I
Who broke through their best ranks to get at you.
And such a havoc, such a rout, Aprile!
Festus. Have you no thought, no memory for me,
Aureole? I am so wretched — my pure Michal
Is gone, and you alone are left me now,
And even you forget me. Take my hand —
Lean on me thus. Do you not know me, Aureole?
Paracelsus. Festus, my own friend, you are come at last?
As you say, 't is an awful enterprise;
But you believe I shall go through with it:
'T is like you, and I thank you. Thank him for me,
Dear Michal! See how bright St. Saviour's spire
Flames in the sunset; all its figures quaint
Gay in the glancing light: you might conceive them
A troop of yellow-vested white-haired Jews
Bound for their own land where redemption dawns.
Festus. Not that blest time — not our youth's time, dear God!
Paracelsus. Ha — stay! true, I forget — all is done since,
And he is come to judge me. How he speaks,
How calm, how well! yes, it is true, all true;
All quackery; all deceit; myself can laugh
The first at it, if you desire: but still
You know the obstacles which taught me tricks
So foreign to my nature — envy and hate,
Blind opposition, brutal prejudice.

Bald ignorance — what wonder if I sunk
To humor men the way they most approved?
My cheats were never palmed on such as you,
Dear Festus! I will kneel if you require me,
Impart the meagre knowledge I possess,
Explain its bounded nature, and avow
My insufficiency — whate'er you will:
I give the fight up: let there be an end,
A privacy, an obscure nook for me.
I want to be forgotten even by God.
But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay me,
When I shall die, within some narrow grave,
Not by itself — for that would be too proud —
But where such graves are thickest; let it look
Nowise distinguished from the hillocks round,
So that the peasant at his brother's bed
May tread upon my own and know it not;
And we shall all be equal at the last,
Or classed according to life's natural ranks,
Fathers, sons, brothers, friends — not rich, nor wise,
Nor gifted: lay me thus, then say, "He lived
Too much advanced before his brother men;
They kept him still in front: 't was for their good
But yet a dangerous station. It were strange
That he should tell God he had never ranked
With men: so, here at least he is a man."

Festus. That God shall take thee to his breast, dear spirit,
Unto his breast, be sure! and here on earth
Shall splendor sit upon thy name forever.
Sun! all the heaven is glad for thee: what care
If lower mountains light their snowy phares
At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge not
The source of day? Their theft shall be their bale:

For after-ages shall retrack thy beams,
And put aside the crowd of busy ones
And worship thee alone — the master-mind,
The thinker, the explorer, the creator!
Then, who should sneer at the convulsive throes
With which thy deeds were born, would scorn as well
The sheet of winding subterraneous fire
Which, pent and writhing, sends no less at last
Huge islands up amid the simmering sea.
Behold thy might in me! thou hast infused
Thy soul in mine; and I am grand as thou,
Seeing I comprehend thee — I so simple,
Thou so august. I recognize thee first;
I saw thee rise, I watched thee early and late,
And though no glance reveal thou dost accept
My homage — thus no less I proffer it,
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest.

Paracelsus. Festus!

Festus. I am for noble Aureole, God!
I am upon his side, come weal or woe.
His portion shall be mine. He has done well.
I would have sinned, had I been strong enough,
As he has sinned. Reward him or I waive
Reward! If thou canst find no place for him,
He shall be king elsewhere, and I will be
His slave forever. There are two of us.

Paracelsus. Dear Festus!

Festus. Here, dear Aureole! ever by you!

Paracelsus. Nay, speak on, or I dream again.
Speak on!
Some story, anything — only your voice.
I shall dream else. Speak on! ay, leaning so!

Festus. Thus the Mayne glideth
Where my Love abideth.

Sleep 's no softer : it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses too faint to catch
A weary bee.

Paracelsus. More, more ; say on !

Festus. And scarce it pushes
Its gentle way through strangling rushes
Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon-heats are near,
Glad the shelving banks to shun,
Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pale throat
Burrows, and the speckled stoat ;
Where the quick sandpipers flit
In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown as they :
Naught disturbs its quiet way,
Save some lazy stork that springs,
Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

Paracelsus. My heart ! they loose my heart, those simple words ;
Its darkness passes, which naught else could touch :
Like some dark snake that force may not expel,
Which glideth out to music sweet and low
What were you doing when your voice broke through

A chaos of ugly images? You, indeed!
Are you alone here?
Festus. All alone: you know me?
This cell?
Paracelsus. An unexceptionable vault:
Good brick and stone: the bats kept out, the rats
Kept in: a snug nook: how should I mistake it?
Festus. But wherefore am I here?
Paracelsus. Ah, well remembered!
Why, for a purpose — for a purpose, Festus!
'T is like me: here I trifle while time fleets,
And this occasion, lost, will ne'er return.
You are here to be instructed. I will tell
God's message; but I have so much to say,
I fear to leave half out. All is confused
No doubt; but doubtless you will learn in time.
He would not else have brought you here: no doubt
I shall see clearer soon.
Festus. Tell me but this —
You are not in despair?
Paracelsus. I? and for what?
Festus. Alas, alas! he knows not, as I feared!
Paracelsus. What is it you would ask me with that earnest
Dear searching face?
Festus. How feel you, Aureole?
Paracelsus. Well:
Well. 'T is a strange thing: I am dying, Festus,
And now that fast the storm of life subsides,
I first perceive how great the whirl has been.
I was calm then, who am so dizzy now —
Calm in the thick of the tempest, but no less
A partner of its motion and mixed up
With its career. The hurricane is spent,

And the good boat speeds through the brightening
weather;
But is it earth or sea that heaves below?
The gulf rolls like a meadow-swell, o'erstrewn
With ravaged boughs and remnants of the shore;
And now some islet, loosened from the land,
Swims past with all its trees, sailing to ocean;
And now the air is full of uptorn canes,
Light strippings from the fan-trees, tamarisks
Unrooted, with their birds still clinging to them,
All high in the wind. Even so my varied life
Drifts by me; I am young, old, happy, sad,
Hoping, desponding, acting, taking rest,
And all at once: that is, those past conditions
Float back at once on me. If I select
Some special epoch from the crowd, 't is but
To will, and straight the rest dissolve away,
And only that particular state is present
With all its long-forgotten circumstance
Distinct and vivid as at first — myself
A careless looker-on and nothing more,
Indifferent and amused, but nothing more.
And this is death: I understand it all.
New being waits me; new perceptions must
Be born in me before I plunge therein;
Which last is Death's affair; and while I speak,
Minute by minute he is filling me
With power; and while my foot is on the threshold
Of boundless life — the doors unopened yet,
All preparations not complete within —
I turn new knowledge upon old events,
And the effect is . . . but I must not tell;
It is not lawful. Your own turn will come
One day. Wait, Festus! You will die like me.

Festus. 'T is of that past life that I burn to hear.
Paracelsus. You wonder it engages me just now?
In truth, I wonder too. What 's life to me?
Where'er I look is fire, where'er I listen
Music, and where I tend bliss evermore.
Yet how can I refrain? 'T is a refined
Delight to view those chances, — one last view.
I am so near the perils I escape,
That I must play with them and turn them over,
To feel how fully they are past and gone.
Still, it is like, some further cause exists
For this peculiar mood — some hidden purpose;
Did I not tell you something of it, Festus?
I had it fast, but it has somehow slipt
Away from me; it will return anon.
Festus. (Indeed his cheek seems young again, his voice
Complete with its old tones: that little laugh
Concluding every phrase, with upturned eye,
As though one stooped above his head to whom
He looked for confirmation and approval,
Where was it gone so long, so well preserved?
Then, the fore-finger pointing as he speaks,
Like one who traces in an open book
The matter he declares; 't is many a year
Since I remarked it last: and this in him,
But now a ghastly wreck!)
And can it be,
Dear Aureole, you have then found out at last
That worldly things are utter vanity?
That man is made for weakness, and should wait
In patient ignorance, till God appoint . . .
Paracelsus. Ha, the purpose: the true purpose: that is it!

How could I fail to apprehend! You here,
I thus! But no more trifling: I see all,
I know all: my last mission shall be done
If strength suffice. No trifling! Stay; this posture
Hardly befits one thus about to speak:
I will arise.

Festus. Nay, Aureole, are you wild?
You cannot leave your couch.

Paracelsus. No help; no help;
Not even your hand. So! there, I stand once more!
Speak from a couch? I never lectured thus.
My gown — the scarlet lined with fur; now put
The chain about my neck; my signet-ring
Is still upon my hand, I think — even so;
Last, my good sword; ah, trusty Azoth, leapest
Beneath thy master's grasp for the last time?
This couch shall be my throne: I bid these walls
Be consecrate, this wretched cell become
A shrine, for here God speaks to men through me.
Now, Festus, I am ready to begin.

Festus. I am dumb with wonder.

Paracelsus. Listen, therefore, Festus!
There will be time enough, but none to spare.
I must content myself with telling only
The most important points. You doubtless feel
That I am happy, Festus; very happy.

Festus. 'T is no delusion which uplifts him thus!
Then you are pardoned, Aureole, all your sin?

Paracelsus. Ay, pardoned: yet why pardoned?

Festus. 'T is God's praise
That man is bound to seek, and you . . .

Paracelsus. Have lived!
We have to live alone to set forth well
God's praise. 'T is true, I sinned much, as I thought,

And in effect need mercy, for I strove
To do that very thing; but, do your best
Or worst, praise rises, and will rise forever.
Pardon from him, because of praise denied —
Who calls me to himself to exalt himself?
He might laugh as I laugh!

Festus. But all comes
To the same thing. 'T is fruitless for mankind
To fret themselves with what concerns them not;
They are no use that way: they should lie down
Content as God has made them, nor go mad
In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

Paracelsus. No, no; mistake me not; let me not work
More harm than I have worked! This is my case:
If I go joyous back to God, yet bring
No offering, if I render up my soul
Without the fruits it was ordained to bear,
If I appear the better to love God
For sin, as one who has no claim on him, —
Be not deceived! It may be surely thus
With me, while higher prizes still await
The mortal persevering to the end.
Beside I am not all so valueless:
I have been something, though too soon I left
Following the instincts of that happy time.

Festus. What happy time? For God's sake, for man's sake,
What time was happy? All I hope to know
That answer will decide. What happy time?

Paracelsus. When but the time I vowed myself to man?

Festus. Great God, thy judgments are inscrutable!

Paracelsus. Yes, it was in me; I was born for it —

I, Paracelsus: it was mine by right.
Doubtless a searching and impetuous soul
Might learn from its own motions that some task
Like this awaited it about the world;
Might seek somewhere in this blank life of ours
For fit delights to stay its longings vast;
And, grappling Nature, so prevail on her
To fill the creature full she dared thus frame
Hungry for joy; and, bravely tyrannous,
Grow in demand, still craving more and more,
And make each joy conceded prove a pledge
Of other joy to follow — bating naught
Of its desires, still seizing fresh pretence
To turn the knowledge and the rapture wrung
As an extreme, last boon, from destiny,
Into occasion for new covetings,
New strifes, new triumphs: — doubtless a strong soul,
Alone, unaided might attain to this,
So glorious is our nature, so august
Man's inborn uninstructed impulses,
His naked spirit so majestical!
But this was born in me; I was made so;
Thus much time saved: the feverish appetites,
The tumult of unproved desire, the unaimed
Uncertain yearnings, aspirations blind,
Distrust, mistake, and all that ends in tears
Were saved me; thus I entered on my course.
You may be sure I was not all exempt
From human trouble; just so much of doubt
As bade me plant a surer foot upon
The sun-road, kept my eye unruined 'mid
The fierce and flashing splendor, set my heart
Trembling so much as warned me I stood there
On sufferance — not to idly gaze, but cast

Light on a darkling race; save for that doubt,
I stood at first where all aspire at last
To stand: the secret of the world was mine.
I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,
But somehow felt and known in every shift
And change in the spirit, — nay, in every pore
Of the body, even,) — what God is, what we are,
That life is — how God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways — one everlasting bliss,
From whom all being emanates, all power
Proceeds; in whom is life for evermore,
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes; where dwells enjoyment there is he:
With still a flying point of bliss remote,
A happiness in store afar, a sphere
Of distant glory in full view; thus climbs
Pleasure its heights forever and forever.
The centre-fire heaves underneath the earth,
And the earth changes like a human face;
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches bright
In hidden mines, spots barren river-beds,
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams bask —
God joys therein. The wroth sea's waves are edged
With foam, white as the bitten lip of hate,
When, in the solitary waste, strange groups
Of young volcanoes come up, cyclops-like,
Staring together with their eyes on flame —
God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth pride.
Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod:
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress passes
Over its breast to waken it, rare verdure
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between

The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;
The grass grows bright, the boughs are swoln with blooms
Like chrysalids impatient for the air,
The shining dorrs are busy, beetles run
Along the furrows, ants make their ado;
Above, birds fly in merry flocks, the lark
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe
Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek
Their loves in wood and plain — and God renews
His ancient rapture. Thus he dwells in all,
From life's minute beginnings, up at last
To man — the consummation of this scheme
Of being, the completion of this sphere
Of life: whose attributes had here and there
Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole,
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
Convergent in the faculties of man.
Power — neither put forth blindly, nor controlled
Calmly by perfect knowledge; to be used
At risk, inspired or checked by hope and fear:
Knowledge — not intuition, but the slow
Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
Strengthened by love: love — not serenely pure,
But strong from weakness, like a chance-sown plant
Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts forth changed buds
And softer stains, unknown in happier climes;

Love which endures and doubts and is oppressed
And cherished, suffering much and much sustained,
And blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,
A half-enlightened, often-chequered trust : —
Hints and previsions of which faculties,
Are strewn confusedly everywhere about
The inferior natures, and all lead up higher,
All shape out dimly the superior race,
The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false,
And man appears at last. So far the seal
Is put on life ; one stage of being complete,
One scheme wound up : and from the grand result
A supplementary reflux of light,
Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains
Each back step in the circle. Not alone
For their possessor dawn those qualities,
But the new glory mixes with the heaven
And earth ; man, once descried, imprints forever
His presence on all lifeless things : the winds
Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout,
A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh,
Never a senseless gust now man is born.
The herded pines commune and have deep thoughts,
A secret they assemble to discuss
When the sun drops behind their trunks which glare
Like grates of hell : the peerless cup afloat
Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph
Swims bearing high above her head : no bird
Whistles unseen, but through the gaps above
That let light in upon the gloomy woods,
A shape peeps from the breezy forest-top,
Arch with small puckered mouth and mocking eye.
The morn has enterprise, deep quiet droops
With evening, triumph takes the sunset hour,

Voluptuous transport ripens with the corn
Beneath a warm moon like a happy face:
— And this to fill us with regard for man.
With apprehension of his passing worth,
Desire to work his proper nature out,
And ascertain his rank and final place,
For these things tend still upward, progress is
The law of life, man is not Man as yet.
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness, here and there a towering mind
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows: when the host
Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers — then, not till then,
I say, begins man's general infancy.
For wherefore make account of feverish starts
Of restless members of a dormant whole,
Impatient nerves which quiver while the body
Slumbers as in a grave? Oh long ago
The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids astir,
The peaceful mouth disturbed; half-uttered speech
Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were set,
The breath drawn sharp, the strong right-hand clenched
stronger,
As it would pluck a lion by the jaw;
The glorious creature laughed out even in sleep!
But when full roused, each giant-limb awake,
Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,
He shall start up and stand on his own earth,
Then shall his long triumphant march begin,
Thence shall his being date, — thus wholly roused,
What he achieves shall be set down to him.

When all the race is perfected alike
As man, that is; all tended to mankind,
And, man produced, all has its end thus far:
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God. Prognostics told
Man's near approach; so in man's self arise
August anticipations, symbols, types
Of a dim splendor ever on before
In that eternal circle life pursues.
For men begin to pass their nature's bound,
And find new hopes and cares which fast supplant
Their proper joys and griefs; they grow too great
For narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
Before the unmeasured thirst for good: while peace
Rises within them ever more and more.
Such men are even now upon the earth,
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round
Who should be saved by them and joined with them.
Such was my task, and I was born to it —
Free, as I said but now, from much that chains
Spirits, high-dowered but limited and vexed
By a divided and delusive aim,
A shadow mocking a reality
Whose truth avails not wholly to disperse
The flitting mimic called up by itself,
And so remains perplexed and nigh put out
By its fantastic fellow's wavering gleam.
I, from the first, was never cheated thus;
I never fashioned out a fancied good
Distinct from man's; a service to be done,
A glory to be ministered unto
With powers put forth at man's expense, withdrawn
From laboring in his behalf; a strength
Denied that might avail him. I cared not

Lest his success ran counter to success
Elsewhere: for God is glorified in man,
And to man's glory vowed I soul and limb.
Yet, constituted thus, and thus endowed,
I failed: I gazed on power till I grew blind.
Power; I could not take my eyes from that:
That only, I thought, should be preserved, increased
At any risk, displayed, struck out at once —
The sign and note and character of man.
I saw no use in the past: only a scene
Of degradation, ugliness and tears,
The record of disgraces best forgotten,
A sullen page in human chronicles
Fit to erase. I saw no cause why man
Should not stand all-sufficient even now,
Or why his annals should be forced to tell
That once the tide of light, about to break
Upon the world, was sealed within its spring:
I would have had one day, one moment's space,
Change man's condition, push each slumbering claim
Of mastery o'er the elemental world
At once to full maturity, then roll
Oblivion o'er the work, and hide from man
What night had ushered morn. Not so, dear child
Of after-days, wilt thou reject the past
Big with deep warnings of the proper tenure
By which thou hast the earth: for thee the present
Shall have distinct and trembling beauty, seen
Beside that past's own shade when, in relief,
Its brightness shall stand out: nor yet on thee
Shall burst the future, as successive zones
Of several wonder open on some spirit
Flying secure and glad from heaven to heaven:
But thou shalt painfully attain to joy,

While hope and fear and love shall keep thee man!
All this was hid from me: as one by one
My dreams grew dim, my wide aims circumscribed,
As actual good within my reach decreased,
While obstacles sprung up this way and that
To keep me from effecting half the sum,
Small as it proved; as objects, mean within
The primal aggregate, seemed, even the least,
Itself a match for my concentred strength —
What wonder if I saw no way to shun
Despair? The power I sought for man, seemed God's.
In this conjuncture, as I prayed to die,
A strange adventure made me know, one sin
Had spotted my career from its uprise;
I saw Aprile — my Aprile there!
And as the poor melodious wretch disburthened
His heart, and moaned his weakness in my ear,
I learned my own deep error; love's undoing
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,
And what proportion love should hold with power
In his right constitution; love preceding
Power, and with much power, always much more love;
Love still too straitened in his present means,
And earnest for new power to set love free.
I learned this, and supposed the whole was learned:
And thus, when men received with stupid wonder
My first revealings, would have worshipped me,
And I despised and loathed their proffered praise —
When, with awakened eyes, they took revenge
For past credulity in casting shame
On my real knowledge, and I hated them —
It was not strange I saw no good in man,
To overbalance all the wear and waste
Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born

To prosper in some better sphere: and why?
In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.
All this I knew not, and I failed. Let men
Regard me, and the poet dead long ago
Who loved too rashly; and shape forth a third
And better-tempered spirit, warned by both:
As from the over-radiant star too mad
To drink the life-springs, beamless thence itself—
And the dark orb which borders the abyss,
Ingulfed in icy night, — might have its course
A temperate and equidistant world.
Meanwhile, I have done well, though not all well.
As yet men cannot do without contempt;
'T is for their good, and therefore fit awhile
That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
Rather than praise the strong and true, in me:
But after, they will know me. If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.
You understand me? I have said enough?

Festus. Now die, dear Aureole !
Paracelsus. Festus, let my hand —
This hand, lie in your own, my own true friend !
Aprile ! Hand in hand with you, Aprile !

Festus. And this was Paracelsus !

NOTE.

THE liberties I have taken with my subject are very trifling ; and the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary. To prove this, I subjoin a popular account, translated from the "Biographie Universelle, Paris," 1822, which I select, not as the best, certainly, but as being at hand, and sufficiently concise for my purpose. I also append a few notes, in order to correct those parts which do not bear out my own view of the character of Paracelsus ; and have incorporated with them a notice or two, illustrative of the poem itself.

"PARACELSUS (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus ab Hohenheim) was born in 1493 at Einsiedeln, (1) a little town in the canton of Schwyz, some leagues distant from Zurich. His father, who exercised the profession of medicine at Villach in Carinthia, was nearly related to George Bombast de Hohenheim, who became afterward Grand Prior of the Order of Malta : consequently Paracelsus could not spring from the dregs of the people, as Thomas Erastus, his sworn enemy, pretends. It appears that his elementary education was much neg-

[1] I shall disguise M. Renauldin's next sentence a little. "Hic (Erastus sc.) Paracelsum trimum a milite quodam, ahi a sue exectum ferunt : constat imberbem illum, mulierumque osorem fuisse." A standing High-Dutch joke in those days at the expense of a number of learned men, as may be seen by referring to such rubbish as Melander's "Joco-seria," etc. In the prints from his portrait by Tintoretto, painted a year before his death, Paracelsus is *barbatulus*, at all events. But Erastus was never without a good reason for his faith — *e. g.* "Helvetium fuisse (Paracelsum) vix credo, vix enim ea regio tale monstrum ediderit." (De Medicina Nova.)

lected, and that he spent part of his youth in pursuing the life common to the travelling *literati* of the age ; that is to say, in wandering from country to country, predicting the future by astrology and cheiromancy, evoking apparitions, and practising the different operations of magic and alchemy, in which he had been initiated whether by his father or by various ecclesiastics, among the number of whom he particularizes the Abbot Tritheim, (2) and many German bishops.

"As Paracelsus displays everywhere an ignorance of the rudiments of the most ordinary knowledge, it is not probable that he ever studied seriously in the schools : he contented himself with visiting the Universities of Germany, France, and Italy ; and in spite of his boasting himself to have been the ornament of those institutions, there is no proof of his having legally acquired the title of Doctor, which he assumes. It is only known that he applied himself long, under the direction of the wealthy Sigismond Függer of Schwatz, to the discovery of the Magnum Opus.

"Paracelsus travelled among the mountains of Bohemia, in the East, and in Sweden, in order to inspect the labors of the miners, to be initiated in the mysteries of the oriental adepts, and to observe the secrets of nature and the famous mountain of loadstone.(3) He professes also to have visited Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Poland, and Transylvania ; everywhere communicating freely, not merely with the physicians, but the old women, charlatans, and conjurers of these several lands. It is even believed that he extended his journeyings as far as Egypt and Tartary, and that he accompanied the son of the Khan of the Tartars to Constantinople, for the purpose of obtaining the secret of the tincture of Trismegistus from a Greek who inhabited that capital.

"The period of his return to Germany is unknown : it is only certain that, at about the age of thirty-three, many astonishing cures which he wrought on eminent personages procured him such a celebrity, that he was called

in 1526, on the recommendation of Œcolampadius, (4) to fill a chair of physic and surgery at the University of Basil. There Paracelsus began by burning publicly in the amphitheatre the works of Avicenna and Galen, assuring his auditors that the latchets of his shoes were more instructed than those two physicians; that all Universities, all writers put together, were less gifted than the hairs of his beard and of the crown of his head; and that, in a word, he was to be regarded as the legitimate monarch of medicine. 'You shall follow me,' cried he, 'you, Avicenna, Galen, Rhasis, Montagnana, Mesues, you, gentlemen of Paris, Montpellier, Germany, Cologne, Vienna,[1] and whomsoever the Rhine and Danube nourish; you who inhabit the isles of the sea; you, likewise, Dalmatians, Athenians; thou, Arab; thou, Greek; thou, Jew: all shall follow me, and the monarchy shall be mine.'[2]

"But at Basil it was speedily perceived that the new Professor was no better than an egregious quack. Scarcely a year elapsed before his lectures had fairly driven away an audience incapable of comprehending their emphatic jargon. That which above all contributed to sully his reputation was the debauched life he led. According to the testimony of Oporinus, who lived two years in his intimacy, Paracelsus scarcely ever ascended the lecture-desk unless half drunk, and only dictated to his secretaries when in a state of intoxication: if summoned

[1] Erastus, who relates this, here oddly remarks, "mirum quod non et Garamantos, Indos et *Anglos* adjunxit." Not so wonderful neither, if we believe what another adversary "had heard somewhere," —that all Paracelsus' system came of his pillaging "Anglum quendam, Rogerium Bacchonem."

[2] See his works *passim*. I must give one specimen: — Somebody had been styling him "Luther alter." "And why not?" (he asks, as he well might). "Luther is abundantly learned, therefore you hate him and me; but we are at least a match for you. — Nam et contra vos et vestros universos principes Avicennam, Galenum, Aristotelem, etc. me satis superque munitum esse novi. Et vertex iste meus calvus ac depilis multo plura et sublimiora novit quam vester vel Avicenna vel universæ academiæ. Prodite, et signum date, qui viri sitis, quid roboris habeatis? quid autem sitis? Doctores et magistri, pediculos pectentes et fricantes podicem." (Frag. Med.)

to attend the sick, he rarely proceeded thither without previously drenching himself with wine. He was accustomed to retire to bed without changing his clothes; sometimes he spent the night in pot-houses with peasants, and in the morning knew no longer what he was about; and, nevertheless, up to the age of twenty-five his only drink had been water. (5)

"At length, fearful of being punished for a serious outrage on a magistrate, (6) he fled from Basil towards the end of the year 1527, and took refuge in Alsatia, whither he caused Oporinus to follow with his chemical apparatus.

"He then entered once more upon the career of ambulatory theosophist.[1] Accordingly we find him at Colmar in 1528; at Nuremberg in 1529; at St. Gall in 1531; at Pfeffers in 1535; and at Augsburg in 1536: he next made some stay in Moravia, where he still further compromised his reputation by the loss of many distinguished patients, which compelled him to betake himself to Vienna; from thence he passed into Hungary; and in 1538 was at Villach, where he dedicated his 'Chronicle' to the States of Carinthia, in gratitude for the many kindnesses with which they had honored his father. Finally, from Mindelheim, which he visited in 1540, Paracelsus proceeded to Salzburg, where he died in the Hospital of St. Stephen (*Sebastian* is meant), Sept. 24, 1541." — (Here follows a criticism on his writings, which I omit.)

(1) *Paracelsus* would seem to be a fantastic version of *Von Hohenheim*; Einsiedeln is the Latinized Eremus, whence Paracelsus is sometimes called, as in the correspondence of Erasmus, Eremita; Bombast, his proper name, probably acquired, from the characteristic phrase-

[1] "So migratory a life could afford Paracelsus but little leisure for application to books, and accordingly he informs us that for the space of ten years he never opened a single volume, and that his whole medical library was not composed of six sheets: in effect, the inventory drawn up after his death states that the only books which he left were the Bible, the New Testament, the Commentaries of St. Jerome on the Gospels, a printed volume on Medicine, and seven manuscripts."

ology of his lectures, that unlucky signification which it has ever since retained.

(2) Then Bishop of Spanheim, and residing at Würzburg in Franconia; a town situated in a grassy fertile country, whence its name, Herbipolis. He was much visited there by learned men, as may be seen by his "Epistolæ Familiares," Hag. 1536: among others, by his staunch friend Cornelius Agrippa, to whom he dates thence, in 1510, a letter in answer to the dedicatory epistle prefixed to the treatise De Occult. Philosoph., which last contains the following ominous allusion to Agrippa's sojourn: "Quum nuper tecum, R. P. in cœnobio tuo apud Herbipolim aliquamdiu conversatus, multa de chymicis, multa de magicis, multa de cabalisticis, cæterisque quæ adhuc in occulto delitescunt, arcanis scientiis atque artibus una contulissemus," etc.

(3) "Inexplebilis illa aviditas naturæ perscrutandi secreta et reconditarum supellectile scientiarum animum iocupletandi, uno eodemque loco diu persistere non patiebatur, sed Mercurii instar, omnes terras, nationes et urbes perlustrandi igniculos supponebat, ut cum viris naturæ scrutatoribus, chymicis præsertim, ore tenus conferret, et quæ diuturnis laboribus nocturnisque vigiliis invenerant una vel altera communicatione obtineret." (Bitiskius in Præfat.) "Patris auxilio primum, deinde propria industria doctissimos viros in Germania, Italia, Gallia, Hispania, aliisque Europæ regionibus, nactus est præceptores; quorum liberali doctrina, et potissimum propria inquisitione ut qui esset ingenio acutissimo ac fere divino, tantum profecit, ut multi testati sint, in universa philosophia, tam ardua, tam arcana et abdita eruisse mortalium neminem." (Melch. Adam. in Vit. Germ. Medic.) "Paracelsus qui in intima naturæ viscera sic penitus introierit, metallorum stirpiumque vires et facultates tam incredibili ingenii acumine exploraverit ac perviderit, ad morbos omnes vel desperatos et opinione hominum insanabiles

percurandum ; ut cum Theophrasto nata primum medicina perfectaque videtur." (Petri Rami Orat. de Basilea.) His passion for wandering is best described in his own words: "Ecce amatorem adolescentem difficillimi itineris haud piget, ut venustam saltem puellam vel fœminam aspiciat: quanto minus nobilissimarum artium amore laboris ac cujuslibet tædii pigebit?" etc. ("Defensiones Septem adversus æmulos suos." 1573. Def. 4ta. "De peregrinationibus et exilio.")

(4) The reader may remember that it was in conjunction with Œcolampadius, then Divinity Professor at Basil, that Zuinglius published in 1528 an answer to Luther's Confession of Faith ; and that both proceeded in company to the subsequent conference with Luther and Melanchthon at Marpurg. Their letters fill a large volume. — "D. D. Johannis Œcolampadii et Huldrichi Zuinglii Epistolarum lib. quatuor." Bas. 1536. It must be also observed that Zuinglius began to preach in 1516, and at Zurich in 1519, and that in 1525 the Mass was abolished in the cantons. The tenets of Œcolampadius were supposed to be more evangelical than those up to that period maintained by the glorious German, and our brave Bishop Fisher attacked them as the fouler heresy : — "About this time arose out of Luther's school one Œcolampadius, like a mighty and fierce giant ; who, as his master had gone beyond the Church, went beyond his master (or else it had been impossible he could have been reputed the better scholar), who denied the real presence ; him, this worthy champion (the Bishop) sets upon, and with five books (like so many smooth stones taken out of the river that doth always run with living water) slays the Philistine ; which five books were written in the year of our Lord 1526, at which time he had governed the see of Rochester twenty years." (Life of Bishop Fisher, 1655.) Now, there is no doubt of the Protestantism of Paracelsus, Erasmus, Agrippa, etc., but the nonconformity of Paracelsus was always scan-

dalous. L. Crasso (" Elogj d'Huomini Letterati," Ven. 1666) informs us that his books were excommunicated by the Church. Quenstedt (de Patr. Doct.) affirms "nec tantum novæ medicinæ, verum etiam novæ theologiæ autor est." Delrio, in his Disquisit. Magicar., classes him among those "partim atheos, partim hæreticos" (lib. i. cap. 3). "Omnino tamen multa theologica in ejusdem scriptis plane atheismum olent, ac duriuscule sonant in auribus vere Christiani." (D. Gabrielis Clauderi Schediasma de Tinct. Univ. Norimb. 1736.) I shall only add one more authority: — "Oporinus dicit se (Paracelsum) aliquando Lutherum et Papam, non minus quam nunc Galenum et Hippocratem redacturum in ordinem minabatur, neque enim eorum qui hactenus in scripturam sacram scripsissent, sive veteres, sive recentiores, quenquam scripturæ nucleum recte eruisse, sed circa corticem et quasi membranam tantum hærere." (Th. Erastus, Disputat. de Med. Nova.) These and similar notions had their due effect on Oporinus, who, says Zuingerus, in his "Theatrum," "longum vale dixit ei (Paracelso), ne ob præceptoris, alioqui amicissimi, horrendas blasphemias ipse quoque aliquando pœnas Deo Opt. Max. lueret."

(5) His defenders allow the drunkenness. Take a sample of their excuses: "Gentis hoc, non viri vitiolum est, a Taciti seculo ad nostrum usque non interrupto filo devolutum, sinceritati forte Germanæ cœvum, et nescio an aliquo consanguinitatis vinculo junctum." (Bitiskius.) The other charges were chiefly trumped up by Oporinus: "Domi, quod Oporinus amanuensis ejus sæpe narravit, nunquam nisi potus ad explicanda sua accessit, atque in medio conclavi ad columnam τετυφωμένος adsistens, apprehenso manibus capulo ensis, cujus κοίλωμα hospitium præbuit, ut aiunt, spiritui familiari, imaginationes aut concepta sua protulit: — alii illud quod in capulo habuit, ab ipso Azoth appellatum, medicinam fuisse præstantissimam aut lapidem Philosophicum putant." (Melch.

Adam.) This famous sword was no laughing-matter in those days, and it is now a material feature in the popular idea of Paracelsus. I recollect a couple of allusions to it in our own literature, at the moment.

> Ne had been known the Danish Gonswart,
> Or Paracelsus with his long sword.
>
> 'Volpone,' act ii. scene 2.

> Bumbastus kept a devil's bird
> Shut in the pummel of his sword,
> That taught him all the cunning pranks
> Of past and future mountebanks.
>
> 'Hudibras,' part ii. cant. 3.

This Azoth was simply "*laudanum suum.*" But in his time he was commonly believed to possess the double tincture — the power of curing diseases and transmuting metals. Oporinus often witnessed, as he declares, both these effects, as did also Franciscus, the servant of Paracelsus, who describes, in a letter to Neander, a successful projection at which he was present, and the results of which, good golden ingots, were confided to his keeping. For the other quality, let the following notice vouch among many others: — "Degebat Theophrastus Norimbergæ procitus a medentibus illius urbis, et vaniloquus deceptorque proclamatus, qui, ut laboranti famæ subveniat, viros quosdam authoritatis summæ in Republica illa adit, et infamiæ amoliendæ, artique suæ asserendæ, specimen ejus pollicetur editurum, nullo stipendio vel accepto pretio, horum faciles præbentium aures jussu elephantiacos aliquot, a communione hominum cæterorum segregatos, et in valetudinarium detrusos, alieno arbitrio eliguntur, quos virtute singulari remediorum suorum Theophrastus a fœda Græcorum lepra mundat, pristinæque sanitati restituit; conservat illustre harum curationum urbs in archivis suis testimonium." (Bitiskius)[1] It is

[1] The premature death of Paracelsus casts no manner of doubt on the fact of his having possessed the Elixir Vitæ: the alchemists have abundant reasons to adduce, from which I select the following, as explanatory of a property of the Tincture not calculated on by its votaries: — "Ob-

to be remarked that Oporinus afterwards repented of his treachery : "Sed resipuit tandem, et quem vivum convitiis insectatus fuerat defunctum veneratione prosequutus, infames famæ præceptoris morsus in remorsus conscientiæ conversi pœnitentia, heu nimis tarda, vulnera clausere exanimi quæ spiranti inflixerant." For these "bites" of Oporinus, see Disputat. Erasti, and Andreæ Jocisci "Oratio de Vit. ob. Oporini;" for the "remorse," Mic. Toxita in pref. Testamenti, and Conringius (otherwise an enemy of Paracelsus), who says it was contained in a letter from Oporinus to Doctor Vegerus.[1]

Whatever the moderns may think of these marvellous attributes, the title of Paracelsus to be considered the father of modern chemistry is indisputable. Gerardus Vossius, "De Philosa et Philosum sectis," thus prefaces the ninth section of cap. 9, "De Chymia" — "Nobilem hanc medicinæ partem, diu sepultam avorum ætate, quasi ab orco revocavit Th. Paracelsus." I suppose many hints lie scattered in his neglected books, which clever appropriators have since developed with applause. Thus, it appears from his treatise "De Phlebotomia," and elsewhere, that he had discovered the circulation of the blood and the sanguification of the heart; as did after him Realdo Colombo, and still more perfectly Andrea Cesalpino of Arezzo, as Bayle and Bartoli observe. Even Lavater quotes a passage from his work "De Natura Rerum," on practical Physiognomy, in which the definitions and axioms are precise enough: he adds, "though an astrological enthusiast, a man of prodigious genius." See Holcroft's translation, vol. iii. p. 179 — "The Eyes." While on the subject of the writings of Paracelsus, I may

jectionem illam, quod Paracelsus non fuerit longævus, nonnulli quoque solvunt per rationes physicas: vitæ nimirum abbreviationem fortasse talibus accidere posse, ob Tincturam frequentiore ac largiore dosi sumtam, dum a summe efficaci et penetrabili hujus virtute calor innatus quasi suffocatur." (Gabrielis Clauderi Schediasma.)

[1] For a good defence of Paracelsus I refer the reader to Olaus Borrichius' treatise — "Hermetis etc. Sapientia vindicata," 1674. Or, if he is no more learned than myself in such matters, I mention simply that Paracelsus introduced the use of Mercury and Laudanum.

explain a passage in the third part of the Poem. He was, as I have said, unwilling to publish his works, but in effect did publish a vast number. Valentius (in Præfat. in Paramyr.) declares "quod ad librorum Paracelsi copiam attinet, audio, a Germanis prope trecentos recenseri." "O fœcunditas ingenii!" adds he, appositely. Many of these were, however, spurious; and Fred. Bitiskius gives his good edition (3 vols. fol. Gen. 1658) "rejectis suppositis solo ipsius nomine superbientibus quorum ingens circumfertur numerus." The rest were "charissimum et pretiosissimum authoris pignus, extorsum potius ab illo quam obtentum." "Jam minime eo volente atque jubente hæc ipsius scripta in lucem prodisse videntur; quippe quæ muro inclusa ipso absente, servi cujusdam indicio, furto surrepta atque sublata sunt," says Valentius. These have been the study of a host of commentators, amongst whose labors are most notable, Petri Severini, "Idea Medicinæ Philosophiæ. Bas. 1571;" Mic. Toxetis, "Onomastica. Arg. 1574;" Dornei, "Dict. Parac. Franc. 1584;" and "Pi Philosæ Compendium cum scholiis auctore Leone Suavio. Paris." (This last, a good book.)

(6) A disgraceful affair. One Liechtenfels, a canon, having been rescued *in extremis* by the "*laudanum*" of Paracelsus, refused the stipulated fee, and was supported in his meanness by the authorities, whose interference Paracelsus would not brook. His own liberality was allowed by his bitterest foes, who found a ready solution of his indifference to profit in the aforesaid sword-handle and its guest. His freedom from the besetting sin of a profession he abhorred — (as he curiously says somewhere, "Quis quæso deinceps honorem deferat professione tali, quæ a tam facinorosis nebulonibus obitur et administratur?") — is recorded in his epitaph, which affirms — "Bona sua in pauperes distribuenda collocandaque erogavit," *honoravit*, or *ordinavit* — for accounts differ.

PIPPA PASSES;

A DRAMA.

1841.

I DEDICATE MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM,
ADMIRINGLY TO THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"
AFFECTIONATELY TO MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD.
R. B

LONDON: 1841.

PERSONS.

PIPPA.
OTTIMA.
SEBALD.
Foreign Students.
GOTTLIEB.
SCHRAMM.
JULES.
PHENE.
Austrian Police.
BLUPHOCKS.
LUIGI *and his* Mother.
Poor Girls.
MONSIGNOR *and his Attendants.*

INTRODUCTION.

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.

SCENE. — *A large mean airy chamber. A girl,* PIPPA, *from the Silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last:

Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure)
One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)
— My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good —
Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood —
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As prosperous ones are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa, — old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow:

Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less:
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven, — 40
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones —
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom 49
O'er Jules and Phene, — what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'T is their marriage-day;
And while they leave church and go home their way,
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist, — will Luigi and his mother grieve —
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose, 60
Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make
Such stir about, — whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain, — what storm dares hurt his peace?

Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa — just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
And here I let time slip for naught!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught
With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing:
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily . . .
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there, — fairies watch unroll
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret!
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not — (safer
Than leaves that embower it,
Or shells that embosom)
— From weevil and chafer?

Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

— Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?
My morn, noon, eve and night — how spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day — and it shall be so —
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hill-side yonder, through the morning,
Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes:
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I . . . what now? — give abundant cause for prate
About me — Ottima, I mean — of late,
Too bold, too confident she'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.
How we talk in the little town below!
But love, love, love — there's better love, I know!
This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley:

Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride —
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
— So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks — a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead:
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no — not envy, this!

— Not envy, sure! — for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning:
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.

At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret: what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird—
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)
— Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face — my father, too!
Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor? — who to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait! — even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

And more of it, and more of it! — oh yes —
I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none — being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
— With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew,
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse —
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street.*

I. — MORNING.

Scene. — *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house.* Luca's *wife,* Ottima, *and her paramour, the German* Sebald.

Sebald [*sings*].

Let the watching lids wink!
Day's a-blaze with eyes, think!
Deep into the night, drink!

Ottima. Night? Such may be your Rhineland nights perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink

— We call such light, the morning: let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice
Behind that frame! — Nay, do I bid you? — Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is 't full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!
Sebald. Ay, thus it used to be.
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here; country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills:
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye.
And wisely: you were plotting one thing there,
Nature, another outside. I looked up —
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember! — and the peasants laughed
And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife."
This house was his, this chair, this window — his.
Ottima. Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
Should lie . . . there 's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!
Sebald. Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where 's dew, where 's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting through the lattice yestereve,

Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.

Ottima. Oh, shut the lattice, pray !

Sebald. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out !
How do you feel now, Ottima ? There, curse
The world and all outside ! Let us throw off
This mask : how do you bear yourself ? Let 's out
With all of it.

Ottima. Best never speak of it.

Sebald. Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance — let those two words mean "His blood"
And nothing more. Notice, I 'll say them now,
"His blood."

Ottima. Assuredly if I repented
The deed —

Sebald. Repent ? Who should repent, or why ?
What puts that in your head ? Did I once say
That I repented ?

Ottima. No, I said the deed.

Sebald. "The deed" and "the event" — just now it was
"Our passion's fruit" — the devil take such cant !
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are . . .

Ottima. Here 's the wine ;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too — wine of both sorts. Black ? White then ?

Sebald. But am not I his cut-throat ? What are you ?

Ottima. There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry.
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass — at first, I say, I used:
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?

Sebald. No, the white wine — the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;
Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?

Ottima. You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.

Sebald. 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.

Ottima. Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?

Sebald. Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We 'll not make much
One of the other — that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday: as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,

To show I love you — yes, still love you — love you
In spite of Luca and what 's come to him
— Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We 'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this: conceive you?
Ottima. Love!
Sebald. Not tied so sure.
Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him — am I
So surely yours? — therefore forever yours?
Ottima. Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another)
Should we have — months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores —
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly . . .
Sebald. "A thing" — there again — "a thing!"
Ottima. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close —
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 't is here
As much as there in the deserted house:
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse: I hate . . .
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you worse,
Luca, than . . ."
Sebald. Off, off — take your hands off mine,
'T is the hot evening — off! oh, morning is it?

Ottima. There 's one thing must be done; you know what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.
Sebald. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.
Ottima. This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four — four gray hairs! Is it so you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No — this way.
Sebald. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world
So Luca lives again! — ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you — yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here —
Bid me despatch my business and begone.
I would . . .
Ottima. See!
Sebald. No, I 'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there 's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate:
What is one young for, else? In age we 'll sigh
O'er the wild reckless wicked days flown over;
Still, we have lived: the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse —

Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!
Ottima. My poor lost friend!
Sebald. He gave me
Life, nothing less: what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more —
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
He sat by us at table quietly:
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched? 150
Could he do less than make pretence to strike?
'T is not the crime's sake — I 'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone!
And you — O how feel you? Feel you for me?
Ottima. Well then, I love you better now than ever
And best (look at me while I speak to you) —
Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours 160
May not now be looked over: look it down!
Great? let it be great; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it!
Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence: even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing. 170
Who stammered — "Yes, I love you?"
Sebald. And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my hands

Lest you should grow too full of me — your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
Ottima. And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings —
Sebald. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
Ottima. Ah — my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
Sebald. You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride thro' grass
Over my ankles.
Ottima. Then our crowning night!
Sebald. The July night?
Ottima. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
Sebald. How it came!
Ottima. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned thro' the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead —
Sebald. Yes!
Ottima. — While I stretched myself upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook

All my locks loose, and covered you with them — 200
You, Sebald, the same you!
Sebald. Slower, Ottima!
Ottima. And as we lay —
Sebald. Less vehemently! Love me!
Forgive me! Take not words, mere words, to heart!
Your breath is worse than wine! Breathe slow, speak slow!
Do not lean on me!
Ottima. Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now! 'T is right to die!
Right to be punished! Naught completes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?
Sebald. How did we ever rise?
Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?
Ottima. I felt you
Taper into a point the ruffled ends 211
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips.
My hair is fallen now: knot it again!
Sebald. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now!
This way? Will you forgive me — be once more
My great queen?
Ottima. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
Sebald. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent . . . 220
[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing* —

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;

The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world! [PIPPA *passes.*

Sebald. God's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?
You, you spoke!
Ottima. Oh — that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step: we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills — their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh!
She does not hear: call you out louder!
Sebald. Leave me!
Go, get your clothes on — dress those shoulders!
Ottima. Sebald?
Sebald. Wipe off that paint! I hate you.
Ottima. Miserable!
Sebald. My God, and she is emptied of it now!
Outright now! — how miraculously gone
All of the grace — had she not strange grace once?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places: and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops, a dead web!
Ottima. Speak to me — not of me!
Sebald. —That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence — all broken!

Ottima. To me — not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward too: but ingrate's worse than all.
Beggar — my slave — a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!
Sebald. My God!
Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-blades —
I should have known there was no blood beneath!
Ottima. You hate me then? You hate me then?
Sebald. To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior — guilt from its excess superior
To innocence! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh I am proud to feel
Such torments — let the world take credit thence —
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate — curse you! God's in his heaven!
Ottima. — Me!
Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself — kill me!
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me — then
Yourself — then — presently — first hear me speak!
I always meant to kill myself — wait, you!
Lean on my breast — not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!
Sebald. My brain is drowned now — quite drowned: all I feel
Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals.

A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit :
There they go — whirls from a black fiery sea !
Ottima. Not me — to him, O God, be merciful !

Talk by the way, while Pippa *is passing from the hill-side to Orcana. Foreign* Students *of painting and sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the house of* Jules, *a young French statuary, at Possagno.*

1st Student. Attention ! My own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five — who 's a defaulter ? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest 's found out.

2nd Student. All here ! Only our poet 's away — never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him ! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino ! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it, — when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too ; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all : whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me, — "*Here a mammoth-poem lies, Fouled to death by butterflies.*" His own fault, the simpleton ! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly. — *Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs : Hebe's plaister — One strip Cools your lip. Phœbus' emul-*

sion — One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury bolus — One box Cures . . .

3rd Student. Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2nd Student. Good! — only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris* . . . and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy Giovacchino!

1st Student. To the point, now. Where 's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh, — listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman — the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche — but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came alone from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again — oh, alone indubitably! — to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers! — so he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

Gottlieb. Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off — what do folks style it? — the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters now, you call his — I can't laugh at them.

4th Student. Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gottlieb. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4th Student. That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there's no doubt he loves the girl — loves a model he might hire by the hour!

Gottlieb. See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those above, his soul's aspiration: but now he is to have the reality." There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Student. Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody!) Will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom — it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favorite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with — as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women? — there follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men? — there's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

1st Student. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this Jules . . . a wretched fribble — oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery — you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla* — cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement — "In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich — I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into — I say, into — the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint — and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova — whose gallery no longer needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

5th Student. Tell him about the women: go on to the women!

1st Student. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now, I happened to hear of a young Greek — real Greek girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss" — Schramm knows! — white

and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest, — a daughter of Natalia, so she swears — that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So first, Jules received a scented letter — somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it: a profound admirer bade him persevere — would make herself known to him ere long. (Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms — the pale cheeks, the black hair — whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too — Phene, which is, by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and despatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way — secrecy must be observed — in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St — st — Here they come!

6th Student. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves!

5th Student. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm and half in calm, — patted down over the left temple, — like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it: and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in.

2nd Student. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy! — rich, that your face may the better set it off.

6th Student. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gottlieb. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1st Student. Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6th Student. She does not speak — has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gottlieb. How he gazes on her! Pity — pity!

1st Student. They go in: now, silence! You three, — not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate: just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II. — NOON.

SCENE. — *Over Orcana. The house of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE: *she is silent, on which* JULES *begins* —

Do not die, Phene! I am yours now, you
Are mine now; let fate reach me how she likes,
If you 'll not die: so, never die! Sit here —
My work-room's single seat. I over-lean
This length of hair and lustrous front; they turn
Like an entire flower upward: eyes, lips, last
Your chin — no, last your throat turns: 'tis their scent
Pulls down my face upon you. Nay, look ever
This one way till I change, grow you — I could
Change into you, beloved!

You by me,
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,
And side by side we sit: all 's true. Thank God!
I have spoken: speak you!
O my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that 's there in clay;
Yet how be carved, with you about the room?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again,
Get fairly into my old ways again,
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth —
The live truth, passing and repassing me,
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only first,
See, all your letters! Was 't not well contrived?
Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps
Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost?
Ah, — this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world!
Again those eyes complete
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
Of all my room holds; to return and rest
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too:
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
And this were the one moment of surprise
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!
What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;
Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:

This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe —
Read this line . . . no, shame — Homer's be the Greek
First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!
This Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
To mark great places with due gratitude;
"*He said, and on Antinous directed*
A bitter shaft" . . . a flower blots out the rest!
Again upon your search? My statues, then!
— Ah, do not mind that — better that will look
When cast in bronze — an Almaign Kaiser, that,
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?
I thought you would have seen that here you sit
As I imagined you, — Hippolyta,
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse.
Recall you this then? "Carve in bold relief" —
So you commanded — "carve, against I come,
A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-branch.
'Praise those who slew Hipparchus!' cry the guests,
'While o'er thy head the singer's myrtle waves
As erst above our champion: stand up, all!'"
See, I have labored to express your thought.
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branch's end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face,
The Praiser's, in the centre: who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,

Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on —
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn.
But you must say a "well" to that — say "well!"
Because you gaze — am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble — marbly
Even to the silence! Why, before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty — to the human archetype.
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that — the tree, the flower — or take the fruit, —
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves; and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang.
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom;
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world. But marble! — 'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly — as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked;

Refine it off to air, you may, — condense it
Down to the diamond; — is not metal there,
When o'er the sudden speck my chisel trips?
— Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?

Phene? what — why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still dilating eyes!
Ah, you will die — I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end 's coming; to be sure, it must
Have ended sometime! Tush, why need I speak
Their foolish speech? I cannot bring to mind
One half of it, beside; and do not care
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
Oh, you — what are you? — if I do not try
To say the words Natalia made me learn,
To please your friends, — it is to keep myself
Where your voice lifted me, by letting that
Proceed: but can it? Even you, perhaps,
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with that —
No, or you would! We 'll stay, then, as we are:
Above the world.

You creature with the eyes!
If I could look forever up to them,
As now you let me, — I believe, all sin,
All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth

Whence all that 's low comes, and there touch and stay
— Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,
Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,
Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so,
Above the world!
But you sink, for your eyes
Are altering — altered! Stay — "I love you, love" . . .
I could prevent it if I understood:
More of your words to me: was 't in the tone
Or the words, your power?
Or stay — I will repeat
Their speech, if that contents you! Only change
No more, and I shall find it presently
Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
Natalia threatened me that harm should follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
Your friends, — Natalia said they were your friends
And meant you well, — because, I doubted it,
Observing (what was very strange to see)
On every face, so different in all else,
The same smile girls like me are used to bear,
But never men, men cannot stoop so low;
Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit
Which seems to take possession of the world
And make of God a tame confederate,
Purveyor to their appetites . . . you know!
But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though they smiled the more,

And all came round me, — that thin Englishman
With light lank hair seemed leader of the rest;
He held a paper — "What we want," said he,
Ending some explanation to his friends —
"Is something slow, involved and mystical,
To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
And lure him on until, at innermost
Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find — this!
— As in the apple's core, the noisome fly:
For insects on the rind are seen at once,
And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
Only when on the lips or loathing tongue."
And so he read what I have got by heart:
I'll speak it, — "Do not die, love! I am yours."
No — is not that, or like that, part of words
Yourself began by speaking? Strange to lose
What cost such pains to learn! Is this more right?

I am a painter who cannot paint;
In my life, a devil rather than saint;
In my brain, as poor a creature too:
No end to all I cannot do!
Yet do one thing at least I can —
Love a man or hate a man
Supremely: thus my lore began.
Through the Valley of Love I went,
In the lovingest spot to abide,
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,
I found Hate dwelling beside.
(Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,
Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)
And further, I traversed Hate's grove,
In the hatefullest nook to dwell;
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love

Where the shadow threefold fell.
(The meaning — those black bride's-eyes above,
Not a painter's lip should tell!)

"And here," said he, "Jules probably will ask,
'You have black eyes, Love, — you are, sure enough,
My peerless bride, — then do you tell indeed
What needs some explanation! What means this?'"
— And I am to go on, without a word —

So, I grew wise in Love and Hate,
From simple that I was of late.
Once, when I loved, I would enlace
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face
Of her I loved, in one embrace —
As if by mere love I could love immensely!
Once, when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
My foe's whole life out like a sponge —
As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!
But now I am wiser, know better the fashion
How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion:
And if I see cause to love more, hate more
Than ever man loved, ever hated before —
And seek in the Valley of Love,
The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove,
Where my soul may surely reach
The essence, naught less, of each,
The Hate of all Hates, the Love
Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove, —
I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
When I love most, Love is disguised
In Hate; and when Hate is surprised

In Love, then I hate most: ask
How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,
Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—
And how, having hated thee,
I sought long and painfully
To reach thy heart, nor prick
The skin but pierce to the quick—
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!

JULES *interposes.*

Lutwyche! Who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me; they at Venice—presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me.
Keep
What 's here, the gold—we cannot meet again,
Consider! and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance or hope or care or need of it.
This—and what comes from selling these, my casts
And books and medals, except . . . let them go
Together, so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches! If by chance
(For all 's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide.
[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing—*

Give her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,

There already, to eternally reprove me?
("Hist!" — said Kate the Queen;
But "Oh!" — cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged? — To the rescue of her honor,
My heart!
Is she poor? — What costs it to be styled a donor?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
("Nay, list!" — bade Kate the Queen;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

[PIPPA *passes.*

JULES *resumes.*

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, "Kate the Queen —
She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed,
"Need him to help her!"
Yes, a bitter thing
To see our lady above all need of us;
Yet so we look ere we will love; not I,
But the world looks so. If whoever loves
Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,
The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?

Here is a woman with utter need of me, —
I find myself queen here, it seems!
How strange!
Look at the woman here with the new soul,
Like my own Psyche, — fresh upon her lips
Alit, the visionary butterfly,
Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
This body had no soul before, but slept
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness:
Now, it will wake, feel, live — or die again!
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be Art — and further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do? — save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their hooting. Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their laughter! I heard them
Henceforth, not God.
To Ancona — Greece — some isle!
I wanted silence only; there is clay
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes
In Art: the only thing is, to make sure
That one does like it — which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene — this mad dream!
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Natalia's friends,
What the whole world except our love — my own,
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,
Ere night we travel for your land — some isle
With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside —

I do but break these paltry models up
To begin Art afresh. Meet Lutwyche, I —
And save him from my statue meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going through his world, there stands
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow:
And you are ever by me while I gaze
— Are in my arms as now — as now — as now!
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far-off seas!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with* BLUPHOCKS, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

Bluphocks. So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned: — now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business; we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors: we know that he is a saint and all that a bishop should be, who is a great man beside. *Oh were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian: for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used

absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger
In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome,
with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with
a sensible alacrity: 't was the Grand Rabbi's abode,
in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in
learning Syriac — (these are vowels, you dogs, —
follow my stick's end in the mud — *Celarent,* 350
Darii, Ferio!) and one morning presented my-
self, spelling-book in hand, a, b, c, — I picked it out
letter by letter, and what was the purport of this
miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past,
you 'll say — "*How Moses hocuspocussed Egypt's land
with fly and locust,*" — or, "*How to Jonah sounded
harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*" — or, "*How
the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a
salaam.*" In no wise! "*Shackabrack — Boach
— somebody or other — Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-* 360
cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of — Stolen Goods!"
So, talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have
renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge — mean
to live so — and die — *As some Greek dog-sage, dead
and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry, With
food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and
Hecate's supper, And never an obolus . . .* (Though
thanks to you, or this Intendant through you, or
this Bishop through his Intendant — I possess a
burning pocketful of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay* 370
the Stygian Ferry!

1st Policeman. There is the girl, then; go and
deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us
Signor Luigi and his mother. [*To the rest.*] I have
been noticing a house yonder, this long while: not a
shutter unclosed since morning!

2nd Policeman. Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the

silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour, wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts. Never molest such a household, they mean well.

Bluphocks. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with? One could make something of that name. Pippa — that is, short for Felippa — rhyming to *Panurge consults Hertrippa — Believest thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2nd Policeman. Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out; the afternoon 's over or nearly so.

3rd Policeman. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our Principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? What 's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool 's busy watching.)

2nd Policeman. Flourish all round — "Put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end — "Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom — "Send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;" ink-spirt on right-hand side (which is the case here) — "Arrest him at once." Why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna — well and good, the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night — there has been the pretence we suspect, the accounts of his corresponding and

holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct, we arrest him at once, to-morrow comes Venice, and presently Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal, sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III. — EVENING.

SCENE. — *Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo.* LUIGI *and his* Mother *entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind, you 'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.
Luigi. Here in the archway?
Mother. Oh no, no — in farther,
Where the echo is made, on the ridge.
Luigi. Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!
Hark — "Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a voice
Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are those?
Mere withered wallflowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress — look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you! — "All of you!"
That 's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz,
Come down and meet your fate? Hark — "Meet your fate!"
Mother. Let him not meet it, my Luigi — do not

Go to his City! Putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned:
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.
Luigi. Hush! Say A. writes, and B.
Mother. These A.s and B.s write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent; you hear each petty injury,
None of his virtues; he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid. Why
Do A. and B. not kill him themselves?
Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him — me — and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A. tried and failed,
I could not teach that: mine 's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .
Mother. — You, Luigi!
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?
Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself! At times — nay, even as now
We sit — I think my mind is touched, suspect
All is not sound: but is not knowing that,
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus — so, all is right again.
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder — "I am rich,
Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,
More than it troubles these?" But it does trouble.
No, trouble 's a bad word: for as I walk
There 's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth,

Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves,
Return to me — whatever may amuse me:
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicala laughs "There goes he, and there!
Feast him, the time is short; he is on his way
For the world's sake: feast him this once, our friend!"
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps. I go
This evening, mother!

Mother. But mistrust yourself —
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him!

Luigi. Oh, there I feel — am sure that I am right!

Mother. Mistrust your judgment then, of the mere means
To this wild enterprise. Say, you are right, —
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,
And a calm hand? You never will escape.

Luigi. Escape? To even wish that, would spoil all.
The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,
To leave myself excuse for longer life:
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
I was put at the board-head, helped to all
At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much.
I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me: — last year's sunsets, and great stars
Which had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away —

Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
Impatient of the azure — and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm —
May's warm slow yellow moonlit summer nights —
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!
Mother. (He will not go!)
Luigi. You smile at me? 'Tis true, —
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now: you reach the city, you must cross
His threshold — how?
Luigi. Oh, that's if we conspired!
Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess —
But guess not how the qualities most fit
For such an office, qualities I have,
Would little stead me, otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit only here.
Every one knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve: and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash? — I find
The wry spoilt branch a natural perfect bow.
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand!
No, no! I have a handsome dress packed up —
White satin here, to set off my black hair;
In I shall march — for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls, make friends there to betray you;

More than one man spoils everything. March straight —
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for.
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Thro' guards and guards —— I have rehearsed it all
Inside the turret here a hundred times.
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe!
But where they cluster thickliest is the door
Of doors; they 'll let you pass — they 'll never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the favorite,
Whence he is bound and what 's his business now.
Walk in — straight up to him; you have no knife:
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you!
Italy, Italy, my Italy!
You 're free, you 're free! Oh mother, I could dream
They got about me — Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!
Mother. Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire: he loves himself — and next, the world —
If he must love beyond, — but naught between:
As a short-sighted man sees naught midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi, ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love:
I could not call you cruel or unkind.
Once more, your ground for killing him! — then go!
Luigi. Now do you try me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces . . .
(If that is all, I 'll satisfy you soon)

— Never by conquest but by cunning, for
That treaty whereby . . .
Mother. Well?
Luigi. (Sure, he's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo: spring's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or . . . better go at once to modern time,
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand
But can't restate the matter; that's my boast:
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.
Mother. Why go to-night?
Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!
Luigi. "I am the bright and morning-star," saith
God —
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star,"
The gift of the morning-star! Have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?
Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live
through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
That triumph at the heels of June the god
Leading his revel through our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here.
Mother. In June: remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming.
Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown — with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.

Luigi. We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso. There, again!

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing.*

A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now:
And the king's locks curled,
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull —
Only calm as a babe new-born:
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
Age with its bane, so sure gone by,
(*The gods so loved him while he dreamed*)
That, having lived thus long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die:

Among the rocks his city was:
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief
Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,
Spy-prowler, or rough pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground;
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak

Of one with sullen thickset brows:
And sometimes from the prison-house
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed
On knees and elbows, belly and breast,
Worm-like into the temple, — caught
He was by the very god,
Who ever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping watch
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!
These, all and every one,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

His councillors, on left and right,
Looked anxious up, — but no surprise
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes
Where the very blue had turned to white.
'T is said, a Python scared one day
The breathless city, till he came,
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
Where the old king sat to judge alway;
But when he saw the sweepy hair
Girt with a crown of berries rare
Which the god will hardly give to wear
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
At his wondrous forest rites, —
Seeing this, he did not dare
Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.
Such grace had kings when the world begun!

[PIPPA *passes.*

Luigi. And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.
Are crowns yet to be won in this late time,
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
'T is God's voice calls: how could I stay? Farewell!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's Brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor* Girls *sitting on the steps.*

1st Girl. There goes a swallow to Venice — the stout seafarer!
Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.
Let us all wish; you wish first!
2nd Girl. I? This sunset
To finish.
3rd Girl. That old — somebody I know,
Grayer and older than my grandfather,
To give me the same treat he gave last week —
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly:
Since had he not himself been late this morning
Detained at — never mind where, — had he not . . .
"Eh, baggage, had I not!" —
2nd Girl. How she can lie!
3rd Girl. Look there — by the nails!
2nd Girl. What makes your fingers red!

3rd Girl. Dipping them into wine to write bad words with
On the bright table: how he laughed!
1st Girl. My turn.
Spring's come and summer's coming. I would wear
A long loose gown, down to the feet and hands,
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day;
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed;
And have new milk to drink, apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . . ah, I should say,
This is away in the fields — miles!
3rd Girl. Say at once
You'd be at home: she'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran. Why, fool,
They've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dung-hill of your garden!
1st Girl. They, destroy
My garden since I left them? well — perhaps!
I would have done so: so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall;
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born:
Cric — cric — I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time — coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.
3rd Girl. How her mouth twitches! Where was I? — before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns

And wasps — would I be such a fool! — Oh, here!
This is my way: I answer every one
Who asks me why I make so much of him —
(If you say, "you love him" — straight "he 'll
not be gulled!")
"He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high — had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
Brown, red, white," — as the case may be: that
pleases!
See how that beetle burnishes in the path!
There sparkles he along the dust: and, there —
Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled at least!
1st Girl. When I was young, they said if you
killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there, would shine no more that day nor next.
2nd Girl. When you were young? Nor are you
young, that 's true.
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!
Why, I can span them. Cecco beats you still?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they 'd find a way to dye our hair
Your color — any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black: the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!
4th Girl. Sick of yours, like enough.
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there 's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up
An ortolan.
2nd Girl. Why, there! Is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window, — quick, —
Where the lights are?

1st Girl. That she? No, or she would sing,
For the Intendant said . . .
3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first!
Then, if she listens and comes close . . . I'll tell
you, —
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you — what fun!
2nd Girl [*sings*].

You'll love me yet! — and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
At least is sure to strike,
And yield — what you'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look? — that pays a thousand pains.
What's death? You'll love me yet!

3rd Girl [*to* PIPPA, *who approaches*]. Oh, you may come closer — we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with. I'll tell you all about it.

IV. — NIGHT.

SCENE. — *Inside the Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, *dismissing his* Attendants.

Monsignor. Thanks, friends, many thanks! I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* . . . ugh, ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather: but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here. To be sure, when 't was full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the* Intendant.] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo.

Intendant. Uguccio —

Monsignor. . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo and Fossombruno; — what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however. Are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Intendant. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Monsignor. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our

elder brother: fourteen years and a month, all 30
but three days. On the Third of December, I
find him . . .

Intendant. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back: they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Monsignor. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh, — nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this Third of December. Talk of disappointments! There 40
was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor I did my utmost to advance, that the Church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of Art. Here's his letter, — "He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals; and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate 50
failure: his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit. There is but one method of escape: confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics," — strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Intendant. Is Correggio a painter?

Monsignor. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, 60
why foolish? He may — probably will — fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way, by a poet now, or a

musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Intendant. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours. First, you select the group of 70 which I formed one, — next you thin it gradually, — always retaining me with your smile, — and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls. And now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now: what is it you want with me?

Monsignor. Ugo!

Intendant. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers — why your 80 brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*, — and your nod at the end meant, — what?

Monsignor. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here. If once you set me coughing, Ugo! —

Intendant. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him — ask me!

Monsignor. I would better not: I should rip up old disgraces, let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli (which, I 90 forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

Intendant. No, nor needs be: for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . .

Monsignor. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this

villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp? Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul! — I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest: my dear two dead brothers were, — what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth: but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only, — for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime: and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villanous seize. Because, to pleasure myself apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw, — am I therefore to let you, the offscouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderi* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No — if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Intendant. What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

Monsignor. — Must punish you, Maffeo. I can not afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in. How should I dare to say . . .

Intendant. "Forgive us our trespasses"?

Monsignor. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud perhaps. Shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning? — I? — who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less keep others out. No: I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Intendant. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Monsignor. 1, 2 — N° 3! — ay, can you read the substance of a letter, N° 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late younger brother — that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of the infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice.

Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and this heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come now!

Intendant. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face; or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly: the child is always ready to produce — as you say — howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Monsignor. Liar!

Intendant. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity; which happens commonly thrice a year. If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop — you!

Monsignor. I see through the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once. All shall be sifted, however — seven times sifted.

Intendant. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death: let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you — the girl — here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak — know nothing of her nor of me! I see her every day

— saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither — have indeed begun operations already. There 's a certain lusty blue-eyed florid-complexioned English knave, I and the Police employ occasionally. You assent, I perceive — no, that 's not it — assent I do not say — but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'T is but a little black-eyed pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her. 'T is as well settled once and forever. Some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled! — you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing* —

Overhead the tree-tops meet,
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;
There was naught above me, naught below,
My childhood had not learned to know:
For, what are the voices of birds
— Ay, and of beasts, — but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?
The knowledge of that with my life begun.
But I had so near made out the sun,
And counted your stars, the seven and one,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges:

And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook me —
Suddenly God took me.

[PIPPA *passes.*

Monsignor [*springing up*]. My people — one and all — all — within there! Gag this villain — tie him hand and foot! He dares . . . I know not half he dares — but remove him — quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* Quick, I say!

SCENE. — PIPPA'S *chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
Wile winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
"Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze" —
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to . . . what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
More like" . . . (what said she?) — "and less like canoes!"
How pert that girl was! — would I be those pert
Impudent staring women! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:

No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills — none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of raw-silk-colored hair, at all events.
Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings.
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph . . . something! I had caught the uncouth name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us — bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours: it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah but — ah but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite:
While — not the worst of people's doings scare
The devil; so there 's that proud look to spare!
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor:
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi! — how that Luigi started
Out of the turret — doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveller's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I? — tired of fooling.
Day for folly, night for schooling!

New Year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content.
Even my lily 's asleep, I vow:
Wake up — here 's a friend I 've plucked you:
Call this flower a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this, with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
While the leaves and parts that witness
Old proportions and their fitness,
Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there 's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers —
"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her . . . name there 's no pronouncing!
See this heightened color too,
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine;
'T was but white when wild she grew.
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of all achieved
Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh what a drear dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
Oh lark, be day's apostle

To mavis, merle and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother howlet, over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

[*After she has begun to undress herself.*

Now, one thing I should like to really know:
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day:
— Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to . . . in some way . . . move them — if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

[*Sitting on the bedside.*

And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah me, and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.

[*As she lies down.*

God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.

All service ranks the same with God —
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we: there is no last nor first.

[*She sleeps.*

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES;

A TRAGEDY.

1842.

NOTE.

So far as I know, this Tragedy is the first artistic consequence of what Voltaire termed "a terrible event without consequences;" and although it professes to be historical, I have taken more pains to arrive at the history than most readers would thank me for particularizing: since acquainted, as I will hope them to be, with the chief circumstances of Victor's remarkable European career — nor quite ignorant of the sad and surprising facts I am about to reproduce (a tolerable account of which is to be found, for instance, in Abbé Roman's *Récit*, or even the fifth of Lord Orrery's Letters from Italy) — I cannot expect them to be versed, nor desirous of becoming so, in all the detail of the memoirs, correspondence, and relations of the time. From these only may be obtained a knowledge of the fiery and audacious temper, unscrupulous selfishness, profound dissimulation, and singular fertility in resources, of Victor — the extreme and painful sensibility, prolonged immaturity of powers, earnest good purpose and vacillating will of Charles — the noble and right woman's manliness of his wife — and the ill-considered rascality and subsequent better-advised rectitude of D'Ormea. When I say, therefore, that I cannot but believe my statement (combining as it does what appears correct in Voltaire and plausible in Condorcet) more true to person and thing than any it has hitherto been my

fortune to meet with, no doubt my word will be taken, and my evidence spared as readily. R. B.

London : 1842.

PERSONS.

Victor Amadeus, *first King of Sardinia.*
Charles Emmanuel, *his son, Prince of Piedmont.*
Polyxena, *wife of Charles.*
D'Ormea, *minister.*

Scene — *The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin, communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left, and another to the right of the stage.*

Time, 1730–1731.

FIRST YEAR, 1730. — KING VICTOR.

Part I.

Charles, Polyxena.

Charles. You think so? Well, I do not.
Polyxena. My beloved,
All must clear up; we shall be happy yet:
This cannot last forever — oh, may change
To-day or any day!
Charles. — May change? Ah yes —
May change!
Polyxena. Endure it, then.
Charles. No doubt, a life
Like this drags on, now better and now worse.
My father may . . . may take to loving me;
And he may take D'Ormea closer yet
To counsel him; — may even cast off her
— That bad Sebastian; but he also may
. . . Or no, Polyxena, my only friend,
He may not force you from me?

Polyxena. Now, force me
From you! — me, close by you as if there gloome
No Sebastians, no D'Ormeas on our path —
At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . . . force me .
Charles. Because I felt as sure, as I feel sure
We clasp hands now, of being happy once.
Young was I, quite neglected, nor concerned
By the world's business that engrossed so much
My father and my brother: if I peered
From out my privacy, — amid the crash
And blaze of nations, domineered those two.
'T was war, peace — France our foe, now — England, friend —
In love with Spain — at feud with Austria! Well —
I wondered, laughed a moment's laugh for pride
In the chivalrous couple, then let drop
My curtain — "I am out of it," I said —
When . . .
Polyxena. You have told me, Charles.
Charles. Polyxena —
When suddenly, — a warm March day, just that!
Just so much sunshine as the cottage child
Basks in delighted, while the cottager
Takes off his bonnet, as he ceases work,
To catch the more of it — and it must fall
Heavily on my brother! Had you seen
Philip — the lion-featured! not like me!
Polyxena. I know —
Charles. And Philip's mouth yet fast to mine
His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm still round
My neck, — they bade me rise, "for I was heir
To the Duke," they said, "the right hand of the Duke:"

Till then he was my father, not the Duke.
So . . . let me finish . . . the whole intricate
World's-business their dead boy was born to, I
Must conquer, — ay, the brilliant thing he was,
I, of a sudden must be: my faults, my follies,
— All bitter truths were told me, all at once,
To end the sooner. What I simply styled
Their overlooking me, had been contempt:
How should the Duke employ himself, forsooth,
With such an one, while lordly Philip rode
By him their Turin through? But he was punished,
And must put up with — me! 'T was sad enough
To learn my future portion and submit.
And then the wear and worry, blame on blame!
For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-smells about,
How could I but grow dizzy in their pent
Dim palace-rooms at first? My mother's look
As they discussed my insignificance,
She and my father, and I sitting by, —
I bore; I knew how brave a son they missed:
Philip had gayly run state-papers through,
While Charles was spelling at them painfully!
But Victor was my father spite of that.
"Duke Victor's entire life has been," I said,
"Innumerable efforts to one end;
And on the point now of that end's success,
Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,
Where 's time to be reminded 't is his child
He spurns?" And so I suffered — scarcely suffered,
Since I had you at length!

Polyxena. — To serve in place
Of monarch, minister, and mistress, Charles.

Charles. But, once that crown obtained, then was 't not like

Our lot would alter? "When he rests, takes breath,
Glances around, sees who there 's left to love —
Now that my mother 's dead, sees I am left —
Is it not like he 'll love me at the last?"
Well, Savoy turns Sardinia; the Duke 's King:
Could I — precisely then — could you expect
His harshness to redouble? These few months
Have been . . . have been . . . Polyxena, do you
And God conduct me, or I lose myself!
What would he have? What is 't they want with me?
Him with this mistress and this minister,
— You see me and you hear him; judge us both!
Pronounce what I should do, Polyxena!

Polyxena. Endure, endure, beloved! Say you not
He is your father? All 's so incident
To novel sway! Beside, our life must change:
Or you 'll acquire his kingcraft, or he 'll find
Harshness a sorry way of teaching it.
I bear this — not that there 's so much to bear.

Charles. You bear? Do not I know that you,
tho' bound
To silence for my sake, are perishing
Piecemeal beside me? And how otherwise
When every creephole from the hideous Court
Is stopped: the Minister to dog me, here —
The Mistress posted to entrap you, there!
And thus shall we grow old in such a life;
Not careless, never estranged, — but old: to alter
Our life, there is so much to alter!

Polyxena. Come —
Is it agreed that we forego complaint
Even at Turin, yet complain we here
At Rivoli? 'T were wiser you announced
Our presence to the King. What 's now afoot

I wonder? Not that any more 's to dread
Than every day's embarrassment: but guess
For me, why train so fast succeeded train
On the high-road, each gayer still than each!
I noticed your Archbishop's pursuivant,
The sable cloak and silver cross; such pomp
Bodes . . . what now, Charles? Can you conceive?
Charles. Not I.
Polyxena. A matter of some moment.
Charles. There 's our life!
Which of the group of loiterers that stare
From the lime-avenue, divines that I —
About to figure presently, he thinks,
In face of all assembled — am the one
Who knows precisely least about it?
Polyxena. Tush!
D'Ormea's contrivance!
Charles. Ay, how otherwise
Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil?
— So that the simplest courtier may remark
'T were idle raising parties for a Prince
Content to linger the Court's laughing-stock.
Something, 't is like, about that weary business
[*Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which* POLYXENA *examines.*
— Not that I comprehend three words, of course,
After all last night's study.
Polyxena. The faint heart!
Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now
Its substance . . . (that 's the folded speech I mean,
Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs)
— What would you have? — I fancied while you spoke,
Some tones were just your father's.

Charles. Flattery!
Polyxena. I fancied so: — and here lurks, sure enough,
My note upon the Spanish Claims! You've mastered
The fief-speech thoroughly: this other, mind,
Is an opinion you deliver, — stay,
Best read it slowly over once to me;
Read — there's bare time; you read it firmly — loud
— Rather loud, looking in his face, — don't sink
Your eye once — ay, thus! "If Spain claims . . ." begin
— Just as you look at me!
Charles. At you! Oh truly,
You have I seen, say, marshalling your troops,
Dismissing councils, or, through doors ajar,
Head sunk on hand, devoured by slow chagrins
— Then radiant, for a crown had all at once
Seemed possible again! I can behold
Him, whose least whisper ties my spirit fast,
In this sweet brow, naught could divert me from
Save objects like Sebastian's shameless lip,
Or worse, the clipped gray hair and dead white face
And dwindling eye as if it ached with guile,
D'Ormea wears . . .

[*As he kisses her, enter from the* KING'S *apartment* D'ORMEA.

I said he would divert
My kisses from your brow!
D'Ormea [*aside*]. Here! So, King Victo
Spoke truth for once: and who's ordained, but I
To make that memorable? Both in call,
As he declared. Were't better gnash the teeth,
Or laugh outright now?
Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. What's his visit for?

D'Ormea [*aside*]. I question if they even speak to me.

Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. Face the man! He 'll suppose you fear him, else.

[*Aloud.*] The Marquis bears the king's command, no doubt?

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Precisely! — If I threatened him, perhaps?

Well, this at least is punishment enough!
Men used to promise punishment would come.

Charles. Deliver the King's message, Marquis!

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ah —
So anxious for his fate? [*Aloud.*] A word, my Prince,
Before you see your father — just one word
Of counsel!

Charles. Oh, your counsel certainly!
Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us!
Well, sir? Be brief, however!

D'Ormea. What? You know
As much as I? — preceded me, most like,
In knowledge! So! ('T is in his eye, beside —
His voice: he knows it, and his heart 's on flame
Already.) You surmise why you, myself,
Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,
Are summoned thus?

Charles. Is the Prince used to know,
At any time, the pleasure of the King,
Before his minister? — Polyxena,
Stay here till I conclude my task: I feel
Your presence (smile not) through the walls, and take
Fresh heart. The King 's within that chamber?

D'Ormea [*passing the table whereon a paper lies, exclaims, as he glances at it*]. "Spain!"

Polyxena [*aside to* CHARLES]. Tarry awhile: what ails the minister?

D' Ormea. Madam, I do not often trouble you.
The Prince loathes, and you scorn me — let that pass!
But since it touches him and you, not me,
Bid the Prince listen!

Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. Surely you will listen!
— Deceit? — those fingers crumpling up his vest?

Charles. Deceitful to the very fingers' ends!

D' Ormea [*who has approached them, overlooks the other paper* CHARLES *continues to hold*]. My project for the Fiefs! As I supposed!
Sir, I must give you light upon those measures
— For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,
Mine too!

Charles. Release me! Do you gloze on me
Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world
You make for me at Turin) your contempt?
— Your measures? — When was not a hateful task
D'Ormea's imposition? Leave my robe!
What post can I bestow, what grant concede?
Or do you take me for the King?

D' Ormea. Not I!
Not yet for King, — not for, as yet, thank God,
One who in . . . shall I say a year, a month?
Ay! — shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave
In his Sardinia. — Europe's spectacle
And the world's by-word! What? The Prince aggrieved
That I excluded him our counsels? Here
[*Touching the paper in* CHARLES's *hand.*
Accept a method of extorting gold
From Savoy's nobles, who must wring its worth
In silver first from tillers of the soil,

Whose hinds again have to contribute brass
To make up the amount: there 's counsel, sir,
My counsel, one year old; and the fruit, this —
Savoy 's become a mass of misery
And wrath, which one man has to meet — the King:
You 're not the King! Another counsel, sir!
Spain entertains a project (here it lies)
Which, guessed, makes Austria offer that same King
Thus much to baffle Spain; he promises;
Then comes Spain, breathless lest she be forestalled,
Her offer follows; and he promises . . .

Charles. — Promises, sir, when he has just agreed
To Austria's offer?

D' Ormea. That 's a counsel, Prince!
But past our foresight, Spain and Austria (choosing
To make their quarrel up between themselves
Without the intervention of a friend)
Produce both treaties, and both promises . . .

Charles. How?

D' Ormea. Prince, a counsel! And the fruit of that?
Both parties covenant afresh, to fall
Together on their friend, blot out his name,
Abolish him from Europe. So, take note,
Here 's Austria and here 's Spain to fight against:
And what sustains the King but Savoy here,
A miserable people mad with wrongs?
You 're not the King!

Charles. Polyxena, you said
All would clear up: all does clear up to me.

D' Ormea. Clear up! 'T is no such thing to envy, then?
You see the King's state in its length and breadth?
You blame me now for keeping you aloof

From counsels and the fruit of counsels? Wait
Till I explain this morning's business!
Charles [*aside*]. No —
Stoop to my father, yes, — D'Ormea, no:
— The King's son, not to the King's counsellor!
I will do something, but at least retain
The credit of my deed. [*Aloud.*] Then it is this
You now expressly come to tell me?
D'Ormea. This
To tell! You apprehend me?
Charles. Perfectly.
Further, D'Ormea, you have shown yourself,
For the first time these many weeks and months,
Disposed to do my bidding?
D'Ormea. From the heart!
Charles. Acquaint my father, first, I wait his pleasure:
Next . . . or, I 'll tell you at a fitter time.
Acquaint the King!
D'Ormea [*aside*]. If I 'scape Victor yet!
First, to prevent this stroke at me: if not, —
Then, to avenge it! [*To* CHARLES.] Gracious sir, I go. [*Goes.*
Charles. God, I forbore! Which more offends, that man
Or that man's master? Is it come to this?
Have they supposed (the sharpest insult yet)
I needed e'en his intervention? No!
No — dull am I, conceded, — but so dull,
Scarcely! Their step decides me.
Polyxena. How decides?
Charles. You would be freed D'Ormea's eye and hers?
— Could fly the court with me and live content?

So, this it is for which the knights assemble!
The whispers and the closeting of late,
The savageness and insolence of old,
— For this!
Polyxena. What mean you?
Charles. How? You fail to catch
Their clever plot? I missed it, but could you?
These last two months of care to inculcate
How dull I am, — D'Ormea's present visit
To prove that, being dull, I might be worse
Were I a King — as wretched as now dull —
You recognize in it no winding up
Of a long plot?
Polyxena. Why should there be a plot?
Charles. The crown 's secure now; I should shame the crown —
An old complaint; the point is, how to gain
My place for one, more fit in Victor's eyes,
His mistress the Sebastian's child.
Polyxena. In truth?
Charles. They dare not quite dethrone Sardinia's Prince:
But they may descant on my dulness till
They sting me into even praying them
Grant leave to hide my head, resign my state,
And end the coil. Not see now? In a word,
They 'd have me tender them myself my rights
As one incapable; — some cause for that,
Since I delayed thus long to see their drift!
I shall apprise the King he may resume
My rights this moment.
Polyxena. Pause! I dare not think
So ill of Victor.
Charles. Think no ill of him!

Polyxena. — Nor think him, then, so shallow as to suffer
His purpose be divined thus easily.
And yet — you are the last of a great line;
There 's a great heritage at stake; new days
Seemed to await this newest of the realms
Of Europe: — Charles, you must withstand this!
Charles. Ah —
You dare not then renounce the splendid Court
For one whom all the world despises? Speak!
Polyxena. My gentle husband, speak I will, and truth.
Were this as you believe, and I once sure
Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,
I could . . . could? Oh what happiness it were —
To live, my Charles, and die, alone with you!
Charles. I grieve I asked you. To the presence, then!
By this, D'Ormea acquaints the King, no doubt,
He fears I am too simple for mere hints,
And that no less will serve than Victor's mouth
Demonstrating in council what I am.
I have not breathed, I think, these many years!
Polyxena. Why, it may be! — if he desire to wed
That woman, call legitimate her child.
Charles. You see as much? Oh, let his will have way!
You 'll not repent confiding in me, love?
There 's many a brighter spot in Piedmont, far,
Than Rivoli. I 'll seek him: or, suppose
You hear first how I mean to speak my mind?
— Loudly and firmly both, this time, be sure!
I yet may see your Rhine-land, who can tell?
Once away, ever then away! I breathe.
Polyxena. And I too breathe.
Charles. Come, my Polyxena!

KING VICTOR.

Part II.

Enter King Victor, *bearing the Regalia on a cushion, from his apartment. He calls loudly.*

Victor. D'Ormea! — for patience fails me, treading thus
Among the obscure trains I have laid, — my knights
Safe in the hall here — in that anteroom,
My son, — D'Ormea, where? Of this, one touch —
[*Laying down the crown.*
This fireball to these mute black cold trains — then
Outbreak enough!
[*Contemplating it.*] To lose all, after all!
This, glancing o'er my house for ages — shaped,
Brave meteor, like the crown of Cyprus now,
Jerusalem, Spain, England, every change
The braver, — and when I have clutched a prize
My ancestry died wan with watching for,
To lose it! — by a slip, a fault, a trick
Learnt to advantage once and not unlearned
When past the use, — "just this once more" (I thought)
"Use it with Spain and Austria happily,
And then away with trick!" An oversight
I'd have repaired thrice over, any time
These fifty years, must happen now! There's peace
At length; and I, to make the most of peace,
Ventured my project on our people here,
As needing not their help: which Europe knows,
And means, cold-blooded, to dispose herself
(Apart from plausibilities of war)

To crush the new-made King — who ne'er till now
Feared her. As Duke, I lost each foot of earth
And laughed at her: my name was left, my sword
Left, all was left! But she can take, she knows,
This crown, herself conceded . . . That 's to try,
Kind Europe! My career 's not closed as yet!
This boy was ever subject to my will,
Timid and tame — the fitter! D'Ormea, too —
What if the sovereign also rid himself
Of thee, his prime of parasites? — I delay!
D'Ormea!

[*As* D'Ormea *enters, the* King *seats himself.*
My son, the Prince — attends he?

D'Ormea. Sir,
He does attend. The crown prepared! — it seems
That you persist in your resolve.

Victor. Who 's come?
The chancellor and the chamberlain? My knights?

D'Ormea. The whole Annunziata. If, my liege,
Your fortune had not tottered worse than now . . .

Victor. Del Borgo has drawn up the schedules: mine —
My son's, too? Excellent! Only, beware
Of the least blunder, or we look but fools.
First, you read the Annulment of the Oaths;
Del Borgo follows . . . no, the Prince shall sign;
Then let Del Borgo read the Instrument:
On which, I enter.

D'Ormea. Sir, this may be truth;
You, sir, may do as you affect — may break
Your engine, me, to pieces: try at least
If not a spring remain worth saving! Take
My counsel as I 've counselled many times!
What if the Spaniard and the Austrian threat?

There 's England, Holland, Venice — which ally
Select you ?
Victor. Aha ! Come, D'Ormea, — "truth"
Was on your lip a minute since. Allies ?
I 've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England
— As who knows if not you ?
D'Ormea. But why with me
Break faith — with one ally, your best, break faith ?
Victor. When first I stumbled on you, Marquis —
't was
At Mondovi — a little lawyer's clerk . . .
D'Ormea. Therefore your soul's ally ! — who
brought you through
Your quarrel with the Pope, at pains enough —
Who simply echoed you in these affairs —
On whom you cannot therefore visit these
Affairs' ill-fortune — whom you trust to guide
You safe (yes, on my soul) through these affairs !
Victor. I was about to notice, had you not
Prevented me, that since that great town kept
With its chicane D'Ormea's satchel stuffed
And D'Ormea's self sufficiently recluse,
He missed a sight, — my naval armament
When I burned Toulon. How the skiff exults
Upon the galliot's wave ! — rises its height,
O'ertops it even ; but the great wave bursts,
And hell-deep in the horrible profound
Buries itself the galliot : shall the skiff
Think to escape the sea's black trough in turn ?
Apply this : you have been my minister
— Next me, above me possibly ; — sad post,
Huge care, abundant lack of peace of mind ;
Who would desiderate the eminence ?
You gave your soul to get it ; you 'd yet give

Your soul to keep it, as I mean you shall,
D'Ormea! What if the wave ebbed with me?
Whereas it cants you to another crest;
I toss you to my son; ride out your ride!
D'Ormea. Ah, you so much despise me?
Victor. You, D'Ormea?
Nowise: and I'll inform you why. A king
Must in his time have many ministers,
And I've been rash enough to part with mine
When I thought proper. Of the tribe, not one
(. . . Or wait, did Pianezze? — ah, just the same!)
Not one of them, ere his remonstrance reached
The length of yours, but has assured me (commonly
Standing much as you stand, — or nearer, say,
The door to make his exit on his speech)
— I should repent of what I did. D'Ormea,
Be candid, you approached it when I bade you
Prepare the schedules! But you stopped in time,
You have not so assured me: how should I
Despise you then?

Enter CHARLES.

Victor [*changing his tone*]. Are you instructed? Do
My order, point by point! About it, sir!
D'Ormea. You so despise me! [*Aside.*] One last stay remains —
The boy's discretion there.
[*To* CHARLES.] For your sake, Prince,
I pleaded, wholly in your interest,
To save you from this fate!
Charles [*aside*]. Must I be told
The Prince was supplicated for — by him?

Victor [*to* D'Ormea]. Apprise Del Borgo, Spava,
and the rest,
Our son attends them; then return.
D' Ormea. One word!
Charles [*aside*]. A moment's pause and they would
drive me hence,
I do believe!
D' Ormea [*aside*]. Let but the boy be firm!
Victor. You disobey?
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. You do not disobey
Me, at least? Did you promise that or no?
D' Ormea. Sir, I am yours: what would you?
Yours am I!
Charles. When I have said what I shall say, 't is like
Your face will ne'er again disgust me. Go!
Through you, as through a breast of glass, I see.
And for your conduct, from my youth till now,
Take my contempt! You might have spared me much,
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed yourself:
That 's over now. Go, ne'er to come again!
D' Ormea. As son, the father — father as, the son!
My wits! My wits! [*Goes.*
Victor [*seated*]. And you, what meant you, pray,
Speaking thus to D'Ormea?
Charles. Let us not
Waste words upon D'Ormea! Those I spent
Have half unsettled what I came to say.
His presence vexes to my very soul.
Victor. One called to manage a kingdom, Charles,
needs heart
To bear up under worse annoyances
Than seems D'Ormea — to me, at least.
Charles [*aside*]. Ah, good!
He keeps me to the point. Then be it so.

[*Aloud.*] Last night, sir, brought me certain papers
— these —
To be reported on, — your way of late.
Is it last night's result that you demand?
Victor. For God's sake, what has night brought
forth? Pronounce
The . . . what 's your word? — result!
Charles. Sir, that had proved
Quite worthy of your sneer, no doubt: — a few
Lame thoughts, regard for you alone could wring,
Lame as they are, from brains like mine, believe!
As 't is, sir, I am spared both toil and sneer.
These are the papers.
Victor. Well, sir? I suppose
You hardly burned them. Now for your result!
Charles. I never should have done great things of
course,
But . . . oh my father, had you loved me more!
Victor. Loved? [*Aside.*] Has D'Ormea played
me false, I wonder?
[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love is diffused —
yourself
May overlook, perchance, your part in it.
Our monarchy is absolutest now
In Europe, or my trouble 's thrown away.
I love, my mode, that subjects each and all
May have the power of loving, all and each,
Their mode: I doubt not, many have their sons
To trifle with, talk soft to, all day long:
I have that crown, this chair, D'Ormea, Charles!
Charles. 'T is well I am a subject then, not you.
Victor [*aside*]. D'Ormea has told him everything.
[*Aloud.*] Aha!
I apprehend you: when all 's said, you take

Your private station to be prized beyond
My own, for instance?
Charles. — Do and ever did
So take it: 'tis the method you pursue
That grieves . . .
Victor. These words! Let me express, my friend,
Your thoughts. You penetrate what I supposed
Secret. D'Ormea plies his trade betimes!
I purpose to resign my crown to you.
Charles. To me?
Victor. Now, — in that chamber.
Charles. You resign
The crown to me?
Victor. And time enough, Charles, sure?
Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years
A crown 's a load. I covet quiet once
Before I die, and summoned you for that.
Charles. 'T is I will speak: you ever hated me.
I bore it, — have insulted me, borne too —
Now you insult yourself; and I remember
What I believed you, what you really are,
And cannot bear it. What! My life has passed
Under your eye, tormented as you know, —
Your whole sagacities, one after one,
At leisure brought to play on me — to prove me
A fool, I thought and I submitted; now
You 'd prove . . . what would you prove me?
Victor. This to me?
I hardly know you!
Charles. Know me? Oh indeed
You do not! Wait till I complain next time
Of my simplicity! — for here 's a sage
Knows the world well, is not to be deceived,
And his experience and his Macchiavels,

D'Ormeas, teach him — what? — that I this while
Have envied him his crown! He has not smiled,
I warrant, — has not eaten, drunk, nor slept,
For I was plotting with my Princess yonder!
Who knows what we might do or might not do?
Go now, be politic, astound the world!
That sentry in the antechamber — nay,
The valet who disposed this precious trap
[*Pointing to the crown.*
That was to take me — ask them if they think
Their own sons envy them their posts! — Know me!

Victor. But you know me, it seems: so, learn in brief,
My pleasure. This assembly is convened . . .

Charles. Tell me, that woman put it in your head!
You were not sole contriver of the scheme,
My father!

Victor. Now observe me, sir! I jest
Seldom — on these points, never. Here, I say,
The knights assemble to see me concede,
And you accept, Sardinia's crown.

Charles. Farewell!
'T were vain to hope to change this: I can end it.
Not that I cease from being yours, when sunk
Into obscurity: I 'll die for you,
But not annoy you with my presence. Sir,
Farewell! Farewell!

Enter D'Ormea.

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ha, sure he 's changed again —
Means not to fall into the cunning trap!
Then Victor, I shall yet escape you, Victor!

Victor [*suddenly placing the crown upon the head of* Charles]. D'Ormea, your King!
[*To* Charles.] My son, obey me! Charles,

Your father, clearer-sighted than yourself,
Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this looks real!
My reasons after; reason upon reason
After: but now, obey me! Trust in me!
By this, you save Sardinia, you save me!
Why, the boy swoons! [*To* D'Ormea.] Come this side!

D'Ormea [*as* Charles *turns from him to* Victor]. You persist?

Victor. Yes, I conceive the gesture's meaning. 'Faith,
He almost seems to hate you: how is that?
Be re-assured, my Charles! Is 't over now?
Then, Marquis, tell the new King what remains
To do! A moment's work. Del Borgo reads
The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,
Then I sign; after that, come back to me.

D'Ormea. Sir, for the last time, pause!

Victor. Five minutes longer
I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesitate —
And I 'll so turn those minutes to account
That . . . Ay, you recollect me! [*Aside.*] Could I bring
My foolish mind to undergo the reading
That Act of Abdication!

[*As* Charles *motions* D'Ormea *to precede him.*
Thanks, dear Charles!

[Charles *and* D'Ormea *retire.*

Victor. A novel feature in the boy, — indeed
Just what I feared he wanted most. Quite right,
This earnest tone: your truth, now, for effect!
It answers every purpose: with that look,
That voice, — I hear him: "I began no treaty,"
(He speaks to Spain), "nor ever dreamed of this

You show me; this I from my soul regret;
But if my father signed it, bid not me
Dishonor him — who gave me all, beside: "
And, "True," says Spain, "'t were harsh to visit that
Upon the Prince." Then come the nobles trooping:
"I grieve at these exactions — I had cut
This hand off ere impose them; but shall I
Undo my father's deed?" — and they confer:
"Doubtless he was no party, after all;
Give the Prince time!"

Ay, give us time, but time!
Only, he must not, when the dark day comes,
Refer our friends to me and frustrate all.
We'll have no child's play, no desponding fits,
No Charles at each cross turn entreating Victor
To take his crown again. Guard against that!

Enter D'Ormea.

Long live King Charles!

No — Charles's counsellor!
Well, is it over, Marquis? Did I jest?

D'Ormea. "King Charles!" What then may you be?

Victor. Anything!
A country gentleman that, cured of bustle,
Now beats a quick retreat toward Chambery,
Would hunt and hawk and leave you noisy folk
To drive your trade without him. I'm Count Remont —
Count Tende — any little place's Count!

D'Ormea. Then Victor, Captain against Catinat
At Staffarde, where the French beat you; and Duke
At Turin, where you beat the French; King late

Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sardinia,
— Now, "any little place's Count" —
Victor. Proceed!
D'Ormea. Breaker of vows to God, who crowned you first;
Breaker of vows to man, who kept you since;
Most profligate to me who outraged God
And man to serve you, and am made pay crimes
I was but privy to, by passing thus
To your imbecile son — who, well you know,
Must — (when the people here, and nations there,
Clamor for you the main delinquent, slipped
From King to — "Count of any little place")
Must needs surrender me, all in his reach, —
I, sir, forgive you: for I see the end —
See you on your return — (you will return) —
To him you trust, a moment . . .
Victor. Trust him? How?
My poor man, merely a prime-minister,
Make me know where my trust errs!
D'Ormea. In his fear,
His love, his —— but discover for yourself
What you are weakest, trusting in!
Victor. Aha,
D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme than this
In your repertory? You know old Victor —
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash — (I've heard
Talkers who little thought the King so close)
Felicitous now, were't not, to provoke him
To clean forget, one minute afterward,
His solemn act, and call the nobles back
And pray them give again the very power
He has abjured? — for the dear sake of what?
Vengeance on you, D'Ormea! No: such am I,

Count Tende or Count anything you please,
— Only, the same that did the things you say,
And, among other things you say not, used
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle, — you
I used, and now, since you will have it so,
Leave to your fate — mere lumber in the midst,
You and your works. Why, what on earth beside
Are you made for, you sort of ministers?
D' Ormea. Not left, though, to my fate! Your witless son
Has more wit than to load himself with lumber:
He foils you that way, and I follow you.
Victor. Stay with my son — protect the weaker side!
D' Ormea. Ay, to be tossed the people like a rag,
And flung by them for Spain and Austria's sport,
Abolishing the record of your part
In all this perfidy!
Victor. Prevent, beside,
My own return!
D' Ormea. That's half prevented now!
'T will go hard but you find a wondrous charm
In exile, to discredit me. The Alps,
Silk-mills to watch, vines asking vigilance —
Hounds open for the stag, your hawk 's a-wing —
Brave days that wait the Louis of the South,
Italy's Janus!
Victor. So, the lawyer's clerk
Won't tell me that I shall repent!
D' Ormea. You give me
Full leave to ask if you repent?
Victor. Whene'er
Sufficient time 's elapsed for that, you judge!
[*Shouts inside* "King Charles!"
D' Ormea. Do you repent?

Victor [*after a slight pause*]. . . . I 've kept them
waiting? Yes!
Come in, complete the Abdication, sir!
[*They go out.*

Enter POLYXENA.

Polyxena. A shout! The sycophants are free of
Charles!
Oh is not this like Italy? No fruit
Of his or my distempered fancy, this,
But just an ordinary fact! Beside,
Here they 've set forms for such proceedings; Victor
Imprisoned his own mother: he should know,
If any, how a son 's to be deprived
Of a son's right. Our duty 's palpable.
Ne'er was my husband for the wily king
And the unworthy subjects: be it so!
Come you safe out of them, my Charles! Our life
Grows not the broad and dazzling life, I dreamed
Might prove your lot; for strength was shut in you
None guessed but I — strength which, untrammelled
once,
Had little shamed your vaunted ancestry —
Patience and self-devotion, fortitude,
Simplicity and utter truthfulness
— All which, they shout to lose!
So, now my work
Begins — to save him from regret. Save Charles
Regret? — the noble nature! He 's not made
Like these Italians: 't is a German soul.

CHARLES *enters crowned.*

Oh, where 's the King's heir? Gone! — the Crown
Prince? Gone! —

Where 's Savoy ? Gone ! — Sardinia ? Gone ! But Charles
Is left ! And when my Rhine-land bowers arrive,
If he looked almost handsome yester-twilight
As his gray eyes seemed widening into black
Because I praised him, then how will he look ?
Farewell, you stripped and whited mulberry-trees
Bound each to each by lazy ropes of vine !
Now I 'll teach you my language : I 'm not forced
To speak Italian now, Charles ?
[*She sees the crown.*] What is this ?
Answer me — who has done this ? Answer !
Charles. He !
I am King now.
Polyxena. Oh worst, worst, worst of all ! Tell me ! What, Victor ? He has made you King ?
What 's he then ? What 's to follow this ? You, King ?
Charles. Have I done wrong ? Yes, for you were not by !
Polyxena. Tell me from first to last.
Charles. Hush — a new world
Brightens before me ; he is moved away
— The dark form that eclipsed it, he subsides
Into a shape supporting me like you,
And I, alone, tend upward, more and more
Tend upward : I am grown Sardinia's King.
Polyxena. Now stop : was not this Victor, Duke of Savoy
At ten years old ?
Charles. He was.
Polyxena. And the Duke spent
Since then, just four-and-fifty years in toil
To be — what ?
Charles. King.

Polyxena. Then why unking himself?
Charles. Those years are cause enough.
Polyxena. The only cause?
Charles. Some new perplexities.
Polyxena. Which you can solve
Although he cannot?
Charles. He assures me so.
Polyxena. And this he means shall last — how long?
Charles. How long?
Think you I fear the perils I confront?
He 's praising me before the people's face —
My people!
Polyxena. Then he 's changed — grown kind, the King?
Where can the trap be?
Charles. Heart and soul I pledge!
My father, could I guard the crown you gained,
Transmit as I received it, — all good else
Would I surrender!
Polyxena. Ah, it opens then
Before you, all you dreaded formerly?
You are rejoiced to be a king, my Charles?
Charles. So much to dare? The better; — much to dread?
The better. I 'll adventure though alone.
Triumph or die, there 's Victor still to witness
Who dies or triumphs — either way, alone!
Polyxena. Once I had found my share in triumph, Charles,
Or death.
Charles. But you are I! But you I call
To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I tendered Heaven
A moment since. I will deserve the crown!

Polyxena. You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were
a glorious thing
For any people, if a heart like his
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap.

Enter VICTOR.

'T is he must show me.
Victor. So, the mask falls off
An old man's foolish love at last. Spare thanks!
I know you, and Polyxena I know.
Here 's Charles — I am his guest now — does he
bid me
Be seated? And my light-haired blue-eyed child
Must not forget the old man far away
At Chambery, who dozes while she reigns.
Polyxena. Most grateful shall we now be, talking
least
Of gratitude — indeed of anything
That hinders what yourself must need to say
To Charles.
Charles. Pray speak, sir!
Victor. 'Faith, not much to say:
Only what shows itself, you once i' the point
Of sight. You 're now the King: you 'il comprehend
Much you may oft have wondered at — the shifts,
Dissimulation, wiliness I showed.
For what 's our post? Here 's Savoy and here 's
Piedmont,
Here 's Montferrat — a breadth here, a space there —
To o'ersweep all these, what 's one weapon worth?
I often think of how they fought in Greece:
(Or Rome, which was it? You 're the scholar,
Charles!)
You made a front-thrust? But if your shield too

Were not adroitly planted, some shrewd knave
Reached you behind ; and him foiled, straight if thong
And handle of that shield were not cast loose,
And you enabled to outstrip the wind,
Fresh foes assailed you, either side ; 'scape these,
And reach your place of refuge — e'en then, odds
If the gate opened unless breath enough
Were left in you to make its lord a speech.
Oh, you will see !

Charles. No : straight on shall I go,
Truth helping ; win with it or die with it.

Victor. 'Faith, Charles, you 're not made Europe's fighting-man !
The barrier-guarder, if you please. You clutch
Hold and consolidate, with envious France
This side, with Austria that, the territory
I held — ay, and will hold . . . which *you* shall hold
Despite the couple ! But I 've surely earned
Exemption from these weary politics,
— The privilege to prattle with my son
And daughter here, though Europe wait the while.

Polyxena. Nay, sir, — at Chambery, away forever,
As soon you will be, 'tis farewell we bid you :
Turn these few fleeting moments to account !
'T is just as though it were a death.

Victor. Indeed !

Polyxena [*aside*]. Is the trap there ?

Charles. Ay, call this parting — death !
The sacreder your memory becomes.
If I misrule Sardinia, how bring back
My father ?

Victor. I mean . . .

Polyxena [*who watches* VICTOR *narrowly this while*]. Your father does not mean

You should be ruling for your father's sake:
It is your people must concern you wholly
Instead of him. You mean this, sir? (He drops
My hand!)
Charles. That people is now part of me.
Victor. About the people! I took certain measures
Some short time since . . . Oh, I know well, you know
But little of my measures! These affect
The nobles; we 've resumed some grants, imposed
A tax or two: prepare yourself, in short,
For clamor on that score. Mark me: you yield
No jot of aught entrusted you!
Polyxena. No jot
You yield!
Charles. My father, when I took the oath,
Although my eye might stray in search of yours,
I heard it, understood it, promised God
What you require. Till from this eminence
He move me, here I keep, nor shall concede
The meanest of my rights.
Victor [*aside*]. The boy 's a fool!
— Or rather, I 'm a fool: for, what 's wrong here?
To-day the sweets of reigning: let to-morrow
Be ready with its bitters.

Enter D'Ormea.

There 's beside
Somewhat to press upon your notice first.
Charles. Then why delay it for an instant, sir?
That Spanish claim perchance? And, now you speak,
— This morning, my opinion was mature,
Which, boy-like, I was bashful in producing

To one I ne'er am like to fear in future!
My thought is formed upon that Spanish claim.
Victor. Betimes indeed. Not now, Charles! You require
A host of papers on it.
D'Ormea [*coming forward*]. Here they are.
[*To* CHARLES.] I, sir, was minister and much beside
Of the late monarch; to say little, him
I served: on you I have, to say e'en less,
No claim. This case contains those papers: with them
I tender you my office.
Victor [*hastily*]. Keep him, Charles!
There 's reason for it — many reasons: you
Distrust him, nor are so far wrong there, — but
He 's mixed up in this matter — he 'll desire
To quit you, for occasions known to me:
Do not accept those reasons: have him stay!
Polyxena [*aside*]. His minister thrust on us!
Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. Sir, believe,
In justice to myself, you do not need
E'en this commending: howsoe'er might seem
My feelings toward you, as a private man,
They quit me in the vast and untried field
Of action. Though I shall myself (as late
In your own hearing I engaged to do)
Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help
Is necessary. Think the past forgotten
And serve me now!
D'Ormea. I did not offer you
My service — would that I could serve you, sir!
As for the Spanish matter . . .
Victor. But despatch
At least the dead, in my good daughter's phrase,
Before the living! Help to house me safe

Ere with D'Ormea you set the world a-gape!
Here is a paper — will you overlook
What I propose reserving for my needs?
I get as far from you as possible:
Here's what I reckon my expenditure.
Charles [*reading*]. A miserable fifty thousand crowns —
Victor. Oh, quite enough for country gentlemen!
Beside the exchequer happens . . . but find out
All that, yourself!
Charles [*still reading*]. "Count Tende" — what means this?
Victor. Me: you were but an infant when I burst
Through the defile of Tende upon France.
Had only my allies kept true to me!
No matter. Tende's, then, a name I take
Just as . . .
D'Ormea. — The Marchioness Sebastian takes
The name of Spigno.
Charles. How, sir?
Victor [*to* D'Ormea]. Fool! All that
Was for my own detailing. [*To* Charles.] That anon!
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. Explain what you have said, sir!
D'Ormea. I supposed
The marriage of the King to her I named,
Profoundly kept a secret these few weeks,
Was not to be one, now he's Count.
Polyxena [*aside*]. With us
The minister — with him the mistress!
Charles [*to* Victor]. No —
Tell me you have not taken her — that woman
To live with, past recall!
Victor. And where's the crime . .

Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. True, sir, this is a matter past recall
And past your cognizance. A day before,
And you had been compelled to note this: now, —
Why note it? The King saved his House from shame:
What the Count did, is no concern of yours.
Charles [*after a pause*]. The Spanish claim, D'Ormea!
Victor. Why, my son,
I took some ill-advised . . . one's age, in fact,
Spoils everything: though I was overreached,
A younger brain, we 'll trust, may extricate
Sardinia readily. To-morrow, D'Ormea,
Inform the King!
D'Ormea [*without regarding* VICTOR, *and leisurely*]. Thus stands the case with Spain:
When first the Infant Carlos claimed his proper
Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .
Victor. I tell you, that stands over! Let that rest!
There is the policy!
Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. Thus much I know,
And more — too much: the remedy?
D'Ormea. Of course!
No glimpse of one.
Victor. No remedy at all!
It makes the remedy itself — time makes it.
D'Ormea [*to* CHARLES]. But if . . .
Victor [*still more hastily*.] In fine, I shall take care of that:
And, with another project that I have . . .
D'Ormea [*turning on him*]. Oh, since Count Tende means to take again
King Victor's crown! —

Polyxena [*throwing herself at* VICTOR's *feet*]. E'en
now retake it, sir !
Oh speak ! We are your subjects both, once more !
Say it — a word effects it ! You meant not,
Not do mean now, to take it : but you must !
'T is in you — in your nature — and the shame 's
Not half the shame 't would grow to afterwards !
Charles. Polyxena !
Polyxena. A word recalls the knights —
Say it ! What 's promising and what 's the past ? 540
Say you are still King Victor !
D' Ormea. Better say
The Count repents, in brief ! [VICTOR *rises.*
Charles. With such a crime
I have not charged you, sir !
Polyxena. (Charles turns from me !)

SECOND YEAR, 1731. — KING CHARLES.

PART I.

Enter Queen POLYXENA *and* D'ORMEA. — *A pause.*

Polyxena. And now, sir, what have you to say ?
D' Ormea. Count Tende . . .
Polyxena. Affirm not I betrayed you ; you resolve
On uttering this strange intelligence
— Nay, post yourself to find me ere I reach
The capital, because you know King Charles
Tarries a day or two at Evian baths
Behind me : — but take warning, — here and thus
[*Seating herself in the royal seat.*
I listen, if I listen — not your friend.
Explicitly the statement, if you still

Persist to urge it on me, must proceed:
I am not made for aught else.
D'Ormea. Good! Count Tende . . .
Polyxena. I, who mistrust you, shall acquaint King Charles
Who even more mistrusts you.
D'Ormea. Does he so?
Polyxena. Why should he not?
D'Ormea. Ay, why not? Motives, seek
You virtuous people, motives! Say, I serve
God at the devil's bidding — will that do?
I'm proud: our people have been pacified,
Really I know not how —
Polyxena. By truthfulness.
D'Ormea. Exactly; that shows I had naught to do
With pacifying them. Our foreign perils
Also exceed my means to stay: but here
'T is otherwise, and my pride's piqued. Count Tende
Completes a full year's absence: would you, madam,
Have the old monarch back, his mistress back,
His measures back? I pray you, act upon
My counsel, or they will be.
Polyxena. When?
D'Ormea. Let's think.
Home-matters settled — Victor's coming now;
Let foreign matters settle — Victor's here
Unless I stop him; as I will, this way.
Polyxena [*reading the papers he presents*]. If this should prove a plot 'twixt you and Victor?
You seek annoyances to give the pretext
For what you say you fear.
D'Ormea. Oh, possibly!
I go for nothing. Only show King Charles

That thus Count Tende purposes return,
And style me his inviter, if you please!
Polyxena. Half of your tale is true; most like, the Count
Seeks to return: but why stay you with us?
To aid in such emergencies.
D' Ormea. Keep safe
Those papers: or, to serve me, leave no proof
I thus have counselled! When the Count returns,
And the King abdicates, 't will stead me little
To have thus counselled!
Polyxena. The King abdicate!
D' Ormea. He 's good, we knew long since — wise, we discover —
Firm, let us hope: — but I 'd have gone to work
With him away. Well!
CHARLES [*without*]. In the Council Chamber?
D' Ormea. All 's lost!
Polyxena. Oh, surely not King Charles! He 's changed —
That 's not this year's care-burthened voice and step:
'T is last year's step, the Prince's voice!
D' Ormea. I know.

[*Enter* CHARLES: — D'ORMEA *retiring a little.*

Charles. Now wish me joy, Polyxena! Wish it me
The old way! [*She embraces him.*
There was too much cause for that!
But I have found myself again. What news
At Turin? Oh, if you but felt the load
I 'm free of — free! I said this year would end
Or it, or me — but I am free, thank God!
Polyxena. How, Charles?

Charles. You do not guess? The day I found
Sardinia's hideous coil, at home, abroad,
And how my father was involved in it, —
Of course, I vowed to rest and smile no more
Until I cleared his name from obloquy.
We did the people right — 't was much to gain
That point, redress our nobles' grievance, too —
But that took place here, was no crying shame:
All must be done abroad, — if I abroad
Appeased the justly-angered Powers, destroyed
The scandal, took down Victor's name at last
From a bad eminence, I then might breathe
And rest! No moment was to lose. Behold
The proud result — a Treaty, Austria, Spain
Agree to —

D' Ormea [*aside*]. I shall merely stipulate
For an experienced headsman.

Charles. Not a soul
Is compromised: the blotted past 's a blank:
Even D' Ormea escapes unquestioned. See!
It reached me from Vienna; I remained
At Evian to despatch the Count his news;
'T is gone to Chambery a week ago —
And here am I: do I deserve to feel
Your warm white arms around me?

D' Ormea [*coming forward*]. He knows that?

Charles. What, in Heaven's name, means this?

D' Ormea. He knows that matters
Are settled at Vienna? Not too late!
Plainly, unless you post this very hour
Some man you trust (say, me) to Chambery
And take precautions I acquaint you with,
Your father will return here.

Charles. Are you crazed,

D'Ormea? Here? For what? As well return
To take his crown!
D' Ormea. He will return for that.
Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. You have not listened to this man?
Polyxena. He spoke
About your safety — and I listened.
[*He disengages himself from her arms.*
Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. What
Apprised you of the Count's intentions?
D' Ormea. Me?
His heart, sir; you may not be used to read
Such evidence however; therefore read
[*Pointing to* POLYXENA'S *papers.*
My evidence.
Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. Oh, worthy this of you!
And of your speech I never have forgotten,
Though I professed forgetfulness; which haunts me
As if I did not know how false it was;
Which made me toil unconsciously thus long
That there might be no least occasion left
For aught of its prediction coming true!
And now, when there is left no least occasion
To instigate my father to such crime —
When I might venture to forget (I hoped)
That speech and recognize Polyxena —
Oh worthy, to revive, and tenfold worse,
That plague! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders
Still in your hand! Silent?
Polyxena. As the wronged are.
Charles. And you, D'Ormea, since when have you presumed
To spy upon my father? I conceive

What that wise paper shows, and easily.
Since when?
D' Ormea. The when and where and how belong
To me. 'T is sad work, but I deal in such.
You ofttimes serve yourself; I 'd serve you here:
Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,
Since the first hour he went to Chambery,
Of his seven servants, five have I suborned.
Charles. You hate my father?
D' Ormea. Oh, just as you will!
[*Looking at* POLYXENA.
A minute since, I loved him — hate him, now!
What matter? — if you ponder just one thing:
Has he that treaty? — he is setting forward
Already. Are your guards here?
Charles. Well for you
They are not! [*To* POLYXENA.] Him I knew of old, but you —
To hear that pickthank, further his designs!
[*To* D'ORMEA.
Guards? — were they here, I 'd bid them, for your trouble,
Arrest you.
D' Ormea. Guards you shall not want. I lived
The servant of your choice, not of your need.
You never greatly needed me till now
That you discard me. This is my arrest.
Again I tender you my charge — its duty
Would bid me press you read those documents.
Here, sir! [*Offering his badge of office.*
Charles [*taking it*]. The papers also! Do you think
I dare not read them?
Polyxena. Read them, sir!

Charles. They prove,
My father, still a month within the year
Since he so solemnly consigned it me,
Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that,
Or my best dungeon . . .
D'Ormea. Even say, Chambery!
'T is vacant, I surmise, by this.
Charles. You prove
Your words or pay their forfeit, sir. Go there!
Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil
Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two! Do say,
You 'll see the falsehood of the charges proved!
Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved
False charges — my heart's love of other times!
Polyxena. Ah, Charles!
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. Precede me, sir!
D'Ormea. And I 'm at length
A martyr for the truth! No end, they say,
Of miracles. My conscious innocence!
[*As they go out, enter — by the middle door, at which he pauses* — Victor.
Victor. Sure I heard voices? No. Well, I do best
To make at once for this, the heart o' the place.
The old room! Nothing changed! So near my seat,
D'Ormea? [*Pushing away the stool which is by the* King's *chair.*
I want that meeting over first,
I know not why. Tush, he, D'Ormea, slow
To hearten me, the supple knave? That burst
Of spite so eased him! He 'll inform me . . .
What?
Why come I hither? All 's in rough: let all
Remain rough. There 's full time to draw back — nay,
There 's naught to draw back from, as yet; whereas,

If reason should be, to arrest a course
Of error — reason good, to interpose
And save, as I have saved so many times,
Our House, admonish my son's giddy youth,
Relieve him of a weight that proves too much —
Now is the time, — or now, or never.
'Faith,
This kind of step is pitiful, not due
To Charles, this stealing back — hither, because
He 's from his capital! Oh Victor! Victor!
But thus it is. The age of crafty men
Is loathsome; youth contrives to carry off
Dissimulation; we may intersperse
Extenuating passages of strength,
Ardor, vivacity, and wit — may turn
E'en guile into a voluntary grace:
But one's old age, when graces drop away
And leave guile the pure staple of our lives —
Ah, loathsome!
Not so — or why pause I? Turin
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for
The asking; all the army 's mine — I 've witnessed
Each private fight beneath me; all the Court 's
Mine too; and, best of all, D'Ormea 's still
D'Ormea and mine. There 's some grace clinging yet:
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight
I 'd take the crown.
No. Just this step to rise
Exhausts me. Here am I arrived: the rest
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here
And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque
Of the old King, crownless, gray hair and hot blood, —
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,
They say, — the eager mistress with her taunts, —

And the sad earnest wife who motions me
Away — ay, there she knelt to me! E'en yet
I can return and sleep at Chambery
A dream out.
Rather shake it off at Turin,
King Victor! Say: to Turin — yes, or no?
'T is this relentless noonday-lighted chamber,
Lighted like life but silent as the grave,
That disconcerts me. That 's the change must strike.
No silence last year! Some one flung doors wide
(Those two great doors which scrutinize me now)
And out I went 'mid crowds of men — men talking,
Men watching if my lip fell or brow knit,
Men saw me safe forth, put me on my road:
That makes the misery of this return.
Oh had a battle done it! Had I dropped,
Haling some battle, three entire days old,
Hither and thither by the forehead — dropped
In Spain, in Austria, best of all, in France —
Spurned on its horns or underneath its hooves,
When the spent monster went upon its knees
To pad and pash the prostrate wretch — I, Victor,
Sole to have stood up against France, beat down
By inches, brayed to pieces finally
In some vast unimaginable charge,
A flying hell of horse and foot and guns
Over me, and all 's lost, forever lost,
There 's no more Victor when the world wakes up!
Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,
Throughout the world. Then after (as whole days
After, you catch at intervals faint noise
Through the stiff crust of frozen blood) — there creeps
A rumor forth, so faint, no noise at all,
That a strange old man, with face outworn for wounds,

Is stumbling on from frontier town to town,
Begging a pittance that may help him find
His Turin out; what scorn and laughter follow
The coin you fling into his cap! And last,
Some bright morn, how men crowd about the midst
O' the market-place, where takes the old king breath
Ere with his crutch he strike the palace-gate
Wide ope!

To Turin, yes or no — or no?

Re-enter CHARLES *with papers.*

Charles. Just as I thought! A miserable falsehood
Of hirelings discontented with their pay
And longing for enfranchisement! A few
Testy expressions of old age that thinks
To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves
By means that suit their natures!
[*Tearing them.*] Thus they shake
My faith in Victor! [*Turning, he discovers* VICTOR.
Victor [*after a pause*]. Not at Evian, Charles?
What 's this? Why do you run to close the doors?
No welcome for your father?
Charles [*aside*]. Not his voice!
What would I give for one imperious tone
Of the old sort! That 's gone forever.
Victor. Must
I ask once more . . .
Charles. No — I concede it, sir!
You are returned to . . . true, your health declines;
True, Chambery 's a bleak unkindly spot;
You 'd choose one fitter for your final lodge —
Veneria, or Moncaglier — ay, that 's close
And I concede it.

Victor. I received advices
Of the conclusion of the Spanish matter,
Dated from Evian Baths . . .
Charles. And you forbore
To visit me at Evian, satisfied
The work I had to do would fully task
The little wit I have, and that your presence
Would only disconcert me —
Victor. Charles?
Charles. — Me, set
Forever in a foreign course to yours,
And . . .
Sir, this way of wile were good to catch,
But I have not the sleight of it. The truth!
Though I sink under it! What brings you here?
Victor. Not hope of this reception, certainly,
From one who 'd scarce assume a stranger mode
Of speech, did I return to bring about
Some awfulest calamity!
Charles. — You mean,
Did you require your crown again! Oh yes,
I should speak otherwise! But turn not that
To jesting! Sir, the truth! Your health declines?
Is aught deficient in your equipage?
Wisely you seek myself to make complaint,
And foil the malice of the world which laughs
At petty discontents; but I shall care
That not a soul knows of this visit. Speak!
Victor [*aside*]. Here is the grateful much-professing son
Prepared to worship me, for whose sole sake
I think to waive my plans of public good!
[*Aloud*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek to take once more
My crown, were so disposed to plague myself,

What would be warrant for this bitterness?
I gave it — grant I would resume it — well?
Charles. I should say simply — leaving out the why
And how — you made me swear to keep that crown:
And as you then intended . . .
Victor. Fool! What way
Could I intend or not intend? As man,
With a man's will, when I say "I intend,"
I can intend up to a certain point,
No farther. I intended to preserve
The crown of Savoy and Sardinia whole:
And if events arise demonstrating
The way, I hoped should guard it, rather like
To lose it . . .
Charles. Keep within your sphere and mine!
It is God's province we usurp on, else.
Here, blindfold through the maze of things we walk
By a slight clue of false, true, right and wrong;
All else is rambling and presumption. I
Have sworn to keep this kingdom: there's my truth.
Victor. Truth, boy, is here, within my breast; and in
Your recognition of it, truth is, too;
And in the effect of all this tortuous dealing
With falsehood, used to carry out the truth,
— In its success, this falsehood turns, again,
Truth for the world. But you are right: these themes
Are over-subtle. I should rather say
In such a case, frankly, — it fails, my scheme:
I hoped to see you bring about, yourself,
What I must bring about. I interpose
On your behalf — with my son's good in sight —
To hold what he is nearly letting go,
Confirm his title, add a grace perhaps.

There 's Sicily, for instance, — granted me
And taken back, some years since : till I give
That island with the rest, my work 's half done.
For his sake, therefore, as of those he rules . . .
Charles. Our sakes are one; and that, you could not say,
Because my answer would present itself
Forthwith : — a year has wrought an age's change.
This people 's not the people now, you once
Could benefit; nor is my policy
Your policy.
Victor [*with an outburst*]. I know it ! You undo
All I have done — my life of toil and care !
I left you this the absolutest rule
In Europe : do you think I sit and smile,
Bid you throw power to the populace
See my Sardinia, that has kept apart,
Join in the mad and democratic whirl
Whereto I see all Europe haste full tide ?
England casts off her kings; France mimics England :
This realm I hoped was safe. Yet here I talk,
When I can save it, not by force alone,
But bidding plagues, which follow sons like you,
Fasten upon my disobedient . . .
[*Recollecting himself*]. Surely
I could say this — if minded so — my son ?
Charles. You could not. Bitterer curses than your curse
Have I long since denounced upon myself
If I misused my power. In fear of these
I entered on those measures — will abide
By them : so, I should say, Count Tende . . .
Victor. No !
But no ! But if, my Charles, your — more than old —

Half-foolish father urged these arguments,
And then confessed them futile, but said plainly
That he forgot his promise, found his strength
Fail him, had thought at savage Chambery
Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli here,
And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga —
Pined for the pleasant places he had built
When he was fortunate and young —

Charles. My father!

Victor. Stay yet! — and if he said he could not die
Deprived of baubles he had put aside,
He deemed, forever — of the Crown that binds
Your brain up, whole, sound and impregnable,
Creating kingliness — the Sceptre too,
Whose mere wind, should you wave it, back would beat
Invaders — and the golden Ball which throbs
As if you grasped the palpitating heart
Indeed o' the realm, to mould as choose you may!
— If I must totter up and down the streets
My sires built, where myself have introduced
And fostered laws and letters, sciences,
The civil and the military arts!
Stay, Charles! I see you letting me pretend
To live my former self once more — King Victor,
The venturous yet politic: they style me
Again, the Father of the Prince: friends wink
Good-humoredly at the delusion you
So sedulously guard from all rough truths
That else would break upon my dotage! — You —
Whom now I see preventing my old shame —
I tell not, point by cruel point, my tale —
For is 't not in your breast my brow is hid?
Is not your hand extended? Say you not . . .

Enter D'Ormea, *leading in* Polyxena.

Polyxena [*advancing and withdrawing* Charles — *to* Victor]. In this conjuncture even, he would say
(Though with a moistened eye and quivering lip)
The suppliant is my father. I must save
A great man from himself, nor see him fling
His well-earned fame away: there must not follow
Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth
So absolute: no enemy shall learn,
He thrust his child 'twixt danger and himself,
And, when that child somehow stood danger out,
Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin Charles
— Body, that's much, — and soul, that's more — and realm,
That's most of all! No enemy shall say . . .

D'Ormea. Do you repent, sir?

Victor [*resuming himself*]. D'Ormea? This is well!
Worthily done, King Charles, craftily done!
Judiciously you post these, to o'erhear
The little your importunate father thrusts
Himself on you to say! — Ah, they 'll correct
The amiable blind facility
You show in answering his peevish suit.
What can he need to sue for? Thanks, D'Ormea!
You have fulfilled your office: but for you,
The old Count might have drawn some few more livres
To swell his income! Had you, lady, missed
The moment, a permission might be granted
To buttress up my ruinous old pile?
But you remember properly the list
Of wise precautions I took when I gave

Nearly as much away — to reap the fruits
I should have looked for!
Charles. Thanks, sir: degrade me,
So you remain yourself! Adieu!
Victor. I 'll not
Forget it for the future, nor presume
Next time to slight such mediators! Nay —
Had I first moved them both to intercede,
I might secure a chamber in Moncaglier
— Who knows?
Charles. Adieu!
Victor. You bid me this adieu
With the old spirit?
Charles. Adieu!
Victor. Charles — Charles!
Charles. Adieu!
[VICTOR *goes.*
Charles. You were mistaken, Marquis, as you hear.
'T was for another purpose the Count came.
The Count desires Moncaglier. Give the order! 400
D'Ormea [*leisurely*]. Your minister has lost your confidence,
Asserting late, for his own purposes,
Count Tende would . . .
Charles [*flinging his badge back*]. Be still the minister!
And give a loose to your insulting joy;
It irks me more thus stifled than expressed:
Loose it!
D'Ormea. There 's none to loose, alas! I see
I never am to die a martyr.
Polyxena. Charles!
Charles. No praise, at least, Polyxena — no praise!

KING CHARLES.

Part II.

D'Ormea, *seated, folding papers he has been examining.*

This at the last effects it: now, King Charles
Or else King Victor — that's a balance: but now,
D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either turn
O' the scale, — that's sure enough. A point to solve.
My masters, moralists, whate'er your style!
When you discover why I push myself
Into a pitfall you'd pass safely by,
Impart to me among the rest! No matter.
Prompt are the righteous ever with their rede
To us the wrongful; lesson them this once!
For safe among the wicked are you set,
D'Ormea! We lament life's brevity,
Yet quarter e'en the threescore years and ten,
Nor stick to call the quarter roundly "life."
D'Ormea was wicked, say, some twenty years;
A tree so long was stunted; afterward,
What if it grew, continued growing, till
No fellow of the forest equalled it?
'T was a stump then; a stump it still must be:
While forward saplings, at the outset checked,
In virtue of that first sprout keep their style
Amid the forest's green fraternity.
Thus I shoot up to surely get lopped down
And bound up for the burning. Now for it!

Enter Charles *and* Polyxena *with* Attendants.

D'Ormea [*rises*]. Sir, in the due discharge of this my office —

This enforced summons of yourself from Turin,
And the disclosure I am bound to make
To-night, — there must already be, I feel,
So much that wounds . . .
Charles. Well, sir?
D' Ormea. — That I, perchance,
May utter also what, another time,
Would irk much, — it may prove less irksome now.
Charles. What would you utter?
D' Ormea. That I from my soul
Grieve at to-night's event: for you I grieve,
E'en grieve for . . .
Charles. Tush, another time for talk!
My kingdom is in imminent danger?
D' Ormea. Let
The Count communicate with France — its King,
His grandson, will have Fleury's aid for this,
Though for no other war.
Charles. First for the levies:
What forces can I muster presently?
[D'ORMEA *delivers papers which* CHARLES *inspects.*
Charles. Good — very good. Montorio . . .
how is this?
— Equips me double the old complement
Of soldiers?
D' Ormea. Since his land has been relieved
From double imposts, this he manages:
But under the late monarch . . .
Charles. Peace! I know.
Count Spava has omitted mentioning
What proxy is to head these troops of his.
D' Ormea. Count Spava means to head his troops himself.

Something to fight for now; "Whereas," says he,
"Under the sovereign's father" . . .
Charles. It would seem
That all my people love me.
D'Ormea. Yes.
[*To* POLYXENA *while* CHARLES *continues to inspect the papers.*
A temper
Like Victor's may avail to keep a state;
He terrifies men and they fall not off;
Good to restrain: best, if restraint were all.
But, with the silent circle round him, ends
Such sway: our King's begins precisely there.
For to suggest, impel and set at work,
Is quite another function. Men may slight,
In time of peace, the King who brought them peace:
In war, — his voice, his eyes, help more than fear.
They love you, sir!
Charles [*to* Attendants]. Bring the regalia forth!
Quit the room! And now, Marquis, answer me!
Why should the King of France invade my realm?
D'Ormea. Why? Did I not acquaint your Majesty
An hour ago?
Charles. I choose to hear again
What then I heard.
D'Ormea. Because, sir, as I said,
Your father is resolved to have his crown
At any risk; and, as I judge, calls in
The foreigner to aid him.
Charles. And your reason
For saying this?
D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ay, just his father's way!
[*To* CHARLES.] The Count wrote yesterday to your
forces' Chief,

Rhebinder — made demand of help —
Charles. To try
Rhebinder — he 's of alien blood : aught else ?
D' Ormea. Receiving a refusal, — some hours after,
The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver
The Act of Abdication : he refusing,
Or hesitating, rather —
Charles. What ensued ?
D' Ormea. At midnight, only two hours since, at Turin,
He rode in person to the citadel
With one attendant, to Soccorso gate,
And bade the governor, San Remi, open — 80
Admit him.
Charles. For a purpose I divine.
These three were faithful, then ?
D' Ormea. They told it me.
And I —
Charles. Most faithful —
D' Ormea. Tell it you — with this
Moreover of my own : if, an hour hence,
You have not interposed, the Count will be
O' the road to France for succor.
Charles. Very good !
You do your duty now to me your monarch
Fully, I warrant ? — have, that is, your project
For saving both of us disgrace, no doubt ? 89
D' Ormea. I give my counsel, — and the only one
A month since, I besought you to employ
Restraints which had prevented many a pang :
But now the harsher course must be pursued.
These papers, made for the emergency,
Will pain you to subscribe : this is a list
Of those suspected merely — men to watch ;

This — of the few of the Count's very household
You must, however reluctantly, arrest;
While here 's a method of remonstrance — sure
Not stronger than the case demands — to take
With the Count's self.

Charles. Deliver those three papers.

Polyxena [*while* CHARLES *inspects them* — to D'ORMEA]. Your measures are not over-harsh, sir: France
Will hardly be deterred from her intents
By these.

D'Ormea. If who proposes might dispose,
I could soon satisfy you. Even these,
Hear what he 'll say at my presenting!

Charles [*who has signed them*]. There!
About the warrants! You 've my signature.
What turns you pale? I do my duty by you
In acting boldly thus on your advice.

D'Ormea [*reading them separately*]. Arrest the people I suspected merely?

Charles. Did you suspect them?

D'Ormea. Doubtless: but — but — sir,
This Forquieri 's governor of Turin,
And Rivarol and he have influence over
Half of the capital! Rabella, too?
Why, sir —

Charles. Oh, leave the fear to me!

D'Ormea [*still reading*]. You bid me
Incarcerate the people on this list?
Sir —

Charles. But you never bade arrest those men,
So close related to my father too,
On trifling grounds?

D'Ormea. Oh, as for that, St. George,

President of Chambery's senators,
Is hatching treason! still —
[*More troubled.*] Sir, Count Cumiana
Is brother to your father's wife! What 's here?
Arrest the wife herself?
Charles. You seem to think
A venial crime this plot against me. Well?
D' Ormea [*who has read the last paper*]. Where-
fore am I thus ruined? Why not take
My life at once? This poor formality
Is, let me say, unworthy you! Prevent it
You, madam! I have served you, am prepared
For all disgraces: only, let disgrace
Be plain, be proper — proper for the world
To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me!
Take back your warrant, I will none of it!
Charles. Here is a man to talk of fickleness!
He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood;
I bid him . . .
D' Ormea. Not you! Were he trebly false,
You do not bid me . . .
Charles. Is 't not written there?
I thought so: give — I 'll set it right.
D' Ormea. Is it there?
Oh yes, and plain — arrest him now — drag here
Your father! And were all six times as plain,
Do you suppose I trust it?
Charles. Just one word!
You bring him, taken in the act of flight,
Or else your life is forfeit.
D' Ormea. Ay, to Turin
I bring him, and to-morrow?
Charles. Here and now!
The whole thing is a lie, a hateful lie.

As I believed and as my father said.
I knew it from the first, but was compelled
To circumvent you ; and the great D'Ormea,
That baffled Alberoni and tricked Coscia,
The miserable sower of such discord
'Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last.
Oh I see ! you arrive — this plan of yours,
Weak as it is, torments sufficiently
A sick old peevish man — wrings hasty speech,
An ill-considered threat from him ; that 's noted ;
Then out you ferret papers, his amusement
In lonely hours of lassitude — examine
The day-by-day report of your paid spies —
And back you come : all was not ripe, you find,
And, as you hope, may keep from ripening yet,
But you were in bare time ! Only, 't were best
I never saw my father — these old men
Are potent in excuses : and meanwhile,
D'Ormea 's the man I cannot do without !
Polyxena. Charles —
Charles. Ah, no question ! You against me too !
You 'd have me eat and drink and sleep, live, die
With this lie coiled about me, choking me !
No, no, D'Ormea ! You venture life, you say,
Upon my father's perfidy : and I
Have, on the whole, no right to disregard
The chains of testimony you thus wind
About me ; though I do — do from my soul
Discredit them : still I must authorize
These measures, and I will. Perugia !
[*Many* Officers *enter*.] Count —
You and Solar, with all the force you have,
Stand at the Marquis' orders : what he bids,
Implicitly perform ! You are to bring

A traitor here; the man that 's likest one
At present, fronts me; you are at his beck
For a full hour! he undertakes to show
A fouler than himself, — but, failing that,
Return with him, and, as my father lives,
He dies this night! The clemency you blame
So oft, shall be revoked — rights exercised,
Too long abjured.
[*To* D'Ormea.] Now sir, about the work!
To save your king and country! Take the warrant!
D'Ormea. You hear the sovereign's mandate, Count Perugia?
Obey me! As your diligence, expect
Reward! All follow to Moncaglier!
Charles [*in great anguish*]. D'Ormea!
[D'Ormea *goes.*
He goes, lit up with that appalling smile!
[*To* Polyxena, *after a pause.*
At least you understand all this?
Polyxena. These means
Of our defence — these measures of precaution?
Charles. It must be the best way; I should have else
Withered beneath his scorn.
Polyxena. What would you say?
Charles. Why, do you think I mean to keep the crown,
Polyxena?
Polyxena. You then believe the story
In spite of all — that Victor comes?
Charles. Believe it?
I know that he is coming — feel the strength
That has upheld me leave me at his coming!
'T was mine, and now he takes his own again.

Some kinds of strength are well enough to have ;
But who 's to have that strength ? Let my crown go !
I meant to keep it ; but I cannot — cannot !
Only, he shall not taunt me — he, the first . . .
See if he would not be the first to taunt me
With having left his kingdom at a word.
With letting it be conquered without stroke,
With . . . no — no — 't is no worse than when he left !
I 've just to bid him take it, and, that over,
We 'll fly away — fly, for I loathe this Turin,
This Rivoli, all titles loathe, all state.
We 'd best go to your country — unless God
Send I die now !

Polyxena. Charles, hear me !

Charles. And again
Shall you be my Polyxena — you 'll take me
Out of this woe ! Yes, do speak, and keep speaking !
I would not let you speak just now, for fear
You 'd counsel me against him : but talk, now,
As we two used to talk in blessed times :
Bid me endure all his caprices ; take me
From this mad-post above him !

Polyxena. I believe
We are undone, but from a different cause.
All your resources, down to the least guard,
Are at D'Ormea's beck. What if, the while,
He act in concert with your father ? We
Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli —
Where find a better place for them ?

Charles [*pacing the room*]. And why
Does Victor come ? To undo all that 's done,
Restore the past, prevent the future ! Seat

His mistress in your seat, and place in mine
. . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there,
To ask of, to consult with, to care for,
To hold up with your hands? Whom? One that 's false —
False — from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false!
The best is, that I knew it in my heart
From the beginning, and expected this,
And hated you, Polyxena, because
You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him,
Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while
He prayed for me, — nay, while he kissed my brow,
I saw ——

Polyxena. But if your measures take effect,
D'Ormea true to you?

Charles. Then worst of all!
I shall have loosed that callous wretch on him!
Well may the woman taunt him with his child —
I, eating here his bread, clothed in his clothes,
Seated upon his seat, let slip D'Ormea
To outrage him! We talk — perchance he tears
My father from his bed; the old hands feel
For one who is not, but who should be there,
He finds D'Ormea! D'Ormea too finds him!
The crowded chamber when the lights go out —
Closed doors — the horrid scuffle in the dark —
The accursed prompting of the minute! My guards!
To horse — and after, with me — and prevent!

Polyxena [*seizing his hand*]. King Charles! Pause here upon this strip of time
Allotted you out of eternity!
Crowns are from God: you in his name hold yours.

Your life 's no least thing, were it fit your life
Should be abjured along with rule; but now,
Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule —
You, who would vulgarly look fine enough
In the world's eye, deserting your soul's charge,—
Ay, you would have men's praise, this Rivoli
Would be illumined! While, as 't is, no doubt,
Something of stain will ever rest on you;
No one will rightly know why you refused
To abdicate; they 'll talk of deeds you could
Have done, no doubt, — nor do I much expect
Future achievement will blot out the past,
Envelope it in haze — nor shall we two
Live happy any more. 'T will be, I feel,
Only in moments that the duty 's seen
As palpably as now: the months, the years
Of painful indistinctness are to come,
While daily must we tread these palace-rooms
Pregnant with memories of the past: your eye
May turn to mine and find no comfort there,
Through fancies that beset me, as yourself,
Of other courses, with far other issues,
We might have taken this great night: such bear,
As I will bear! What matters happiness?
Duty! There 's man's one moment: this is yours!

[*Putting the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand, she places him on his seat: a long pause and silence.*

Enter D'Ormea *and* Victor, *with* Guards.

Victor. At last I speak; but once — that once, to you!
'T is you I ask, not these your varletry,
Who 's King of us?

Charles [*from his seat*]. Count Tende . . .
Victor. What your spies
Assert I ponder in my soul, I say —
Here to your face, amid your guards! I choose
To take again the crown whose shadow I gave —
For still its potency surrounds the weak
White locks their felon hands have discomposed.
Or I 'll not ask who 's King, but simply, who
Withholds the crown I claim? Deliver it!
I have no friend in the wide world: nor France
Nor England cares for me: you see the sum
Of what I can avail. Deliver it!
Charles. Take it, my father!
And now say in turn,
Was it done well, my father — sure not well,
To try me thus! I might have seen much cause
For keeping it — too easily seen cause!
But, from that moment, e'en more wofully
My life had pined away, than pine it will.
Already you have much to answer for.
My life to pine is nothing, — her sunk eyes
Were happy once! No doubt, my people think
I am their King still . . . but I cannot strive!
Take it!
Victor [*one hand on the crown* CHARLES *offers, the other on his neck*]. So few years give it quietly,
My son! It will drop from me. See you not?
A crown 's unlike a sword to give away —
That, let a strong hand to a weak hand give!
But crowns should slip from palsied brows to heads
Young as this head: yet mine is weak enough,
E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for phrases
To vindicate my right. 'T is of a piece!
All is alike gone by with me — who beat

Once D'Orleans in his lines — his very lines!
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis's rival,
And now . . .
Charles [*putting the crown on him, to the rest*]
The King speaks, yet none kneels, I think!
Victor. I am then King! As I became a King
Despite the nations, kept myself a King,
So I die King, with Kingship dying too
Around me. I have lasted Europe's time.
What wants my story of completion? Where
Must needs the damning break show? Who mistrusts
My children here — tell they of any break
'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall?
And who were by me when I died but they?
D'Ormea there!
Charles. What means he?
Victor. Ever there!
Charles — how to save your story! Mine must go
Say — say that you refused the crown to me!
Charles, yours shall be my story! You immured
Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year
I spend without a sight of you, then die.
That will serve every purpose — tell that tale
The world!
Charles. Mistrust me? Help!
Victor. Past help, past reach!
'T is in the heart — you cannot reach the heart:
This broke mine, that I did believe, you, Charles,
Would have denied me and disgraced me.
Polyxena. Charles
Has never ceased to be your subject, sir!
He reigned at first through setting up yourself
As pattern: if he e'er seemed harsh to you.

'T was from a too intense appreciation
Of your own character: he acted you —
Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,
Nor look for any other than this end.
I hold him worlds the worse on that account;
But so it was.

Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. I love you now indeed.
[*To* VICTOR.] You never knew me.

Victor. Hardly till this moment,
When I seem learning many other things
Because the time for using them is past.
If 't were to do again! That 's idly wished.
Truthfulness might prove policy as good
As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead? Yes:
I 've made it fitter now to be a queen's
Than formerly: I 've ploughed the deep lines there
Which keep too well a crown from slipping off.
No matter. Guile has made me King again.
Louis — 't was in King Victor's time: — long since,
When Louis reigned and, also, Victor reigned.
How the world talks already of us two!
God of eclipse and each discolored star,
Why do I linger then?
Ha! Where lurks he?
D'Ormea! Nearer to your King! Now stand!
[*Collecting his strength as* D'ORMEA *approaches.*
You lied, D'Ormea! I do not repent. [*Dies*

NOTES.

PAULINE.

Pauline. A man with high-strung, artistic temperament makes to his mistress Pauline, from whom he has evidently been separated for some time, a rambling confession wherein he presents the various phases of mental and moral development through which he has passed. He has a highly evolved self-consciousness, from which all his qualities stand apart and by which they are ruled. He craves all experience, and, not being able actually to accomplish this, his imagination helps him through his power of identifying himself with the heroes, real and imaginary, of the past. Thus equipped, he represents himself as having attained great intellectual mastery at the same time that he loses the power of loving except as "sense" (which we take to mean intellect) supplies him with a perception of love. He seems to fluctuate between periods of utter despair, when he loses all hope and falls into excesses of a nature only hinted at, and periods of intellectual activity. In the course of his intellectual growth he passes through a mood for writing lyrical verses upon the old tales with which he is so familiar. A more ambitious mood, when he vies with the poetical feats of the ancient bards, follows. Then he is occupied in a search for great thoughts, and falls upon Shelley (the Sun-treader). Emulating Shelley, he vows himself to liberty; then, with Plato, he grows enthusiastic over the social redemption of mankind; then he falls to studying mankind with a view to working out its salvation. He wakes, however, from this dream, and contemplates tak-

ing refuge in poetry again, wherein he can at least give expression to the ideals he no longer believes attainable, but is evidently deterred by the thought of the ephemeralness of all fame. After more incoherences, he seems finally, through the gentle influence of Pauline, to gain some peace of mind; a true emotional feeling for her develops, and love for God, toward whom he had always yearned, is born. His confession closes with an apostrophe to Shelley, who has many times been the one guiding star in his tempestuous course, and to whom he now declares that he believes in "God and love and truth."

Some illustrative comments are supplied by Browning himself in the prefatory mottoes: Lines of Clément Marot (the Norman-French poet, 1497–1544), that may be translated, —

> "Not now am I what I have been,
> Nor know how I may be again;"

and a passage introductory to a treatise on occult philosophy by Henry Cornelius Agrippa (the French physician and astrologer, 1486–1535), that may be translated as follows:

"I doubt not but the title of our book by its rarity may entice very many to the perusal of it. Among whom many of hostile opinions, with weak minds, many even malignant and ungrateful, will assail our genius, who in their rash ignorance, hardly before the title is before their eyes, will make a clamour. We are forbidden to teach, to scatter abroad the seeds of philosophy, pious ears being offended, clear-seeing minds having arisen. I, as a counsellor, assail their consciences, but neither Apollo, nor all the Muses, nor an angel from heaven, would be able to save me from their execrations, whom now I counsel that they may not read our books, that they may not understand them, that they may not remember them, for they are noxious, they are poisonous. The mouth of Acheron is in this book: it speaks often of stones; beware, lest by these it shake the understand-

ing. You, also, who with fair mind shall come to the reading, if you will apply so much of the discernment of prudence as bees in gathering honey, then read with security. For, indeed, I believe you about to receive many things not a little both for instruction and enjoyment. But if you find anything that pleases you not, let it go that you may not use it, for I do not declare these things good for you, but merely relate them. Nevertheless, in spite of these, do not reject the rest. Therefore, if any freer word may be, forgive our youth; I, who am less than a youth, have composed this work."

V. A. XX. stands for *Vixi annos viginti*, I was twenty years old.

Further comment is supplied in the editorial note, in French, signed "Pauline," and purporting to be the sympathetic criticism of the calm loved one, who receives the confession. It may be rendered as follows:

"I much fear that my poor friend will not be always perfectly understood in what remains to be read of this strange fragment, and it is less appropriate than any other part to illustrate what of its nature can never be anything but dream and confusion. Moreover, I do not very well know whether in seeking to connect certain parts better one would not run the risk of obstructing the only merit to which so singular a production can pretend, — that of giving a close enough idea of the kind of nature of which it has made merely a sketch. This unpretending opening, this stir of passions which go on at first increasing and then by degrees subside, these outbursts of the soul, this sudden return upon himself, and above all, the turn of mind quite peculiar to my friend, have made alterations almost impossible. The reasons he urges elsewhere, with others more powerful still, have found grace in my eyes for this work which otherwise I should have advised him to throw into the fire. I believe none the less in the great principle of all composition, — in the principle of Shakespeare, Raphael, and Beethoven, — from whence it follows that concentration of ideas is due much more

to their conception than to their manner of execution : I have every reason to fear that the first of these qualities is still foreign enough to my friend, and I doubt very much if redoubled labor would enable him to acquire the second. It would be best to burn this ; but what can I do?

" I think that in what follows he refers to a certain investigation he has made elsewhere of the soul, or rather of his soul, in order to discover the connection of the objects which it might be possible for him to attain, and from each of which, once obtained, a kind of platform could be formed from whence one could perceive other ends, other plans, other joys, which, in their turn, could be surmounted. Thence it would result that oblivion and sleep should come to end all. This idea, which I seize imperfectly, is perhaps as unintelligible to him as to me."

About five years after the publication of " Pauline," Browning wrote on the fly-leaf of a copy of the original edition of " Pauline," according to Mr. R. H. Shepherd, who formerly owned this volume, as follows :

" ' Pauline ' written in pursuance of a foolish plan I forget, or have no wish to remember ; involving the assumption of several distinct characters : the world was never to guess that such an opera, such a comedy, such a speech proceeded from the same notable person. Mr. V. A. was Poet of the party, and predestined to cut no inconsiderable figure. ' Only this crab ' remains of the shapely Tree of Life in my Fool's Paradise."

This poem had been quite forgotten by the public when Dante Gabriel Rossetti happened to find it in the British Museum bound up with a number of miscellaneous poems. He conjectured from internal evidence that it was Browning's, copied it, and wrote to Browning asking him if it were his, whereupon Browning acknowledged it, though evidently with reluctance, if we may judge from the preface in the first collected edition in which this poem appears.

"The first piece in the series, I acknowledge and retain with extreme repugnance, indeed purely of necessity; for not long ago I inspected one, and am certified of the existence of other transcripts, intended sooner or later to be published abroad: by forestalling these I can at least correct some misprints (no syllable is changed) and introduce a boyish work with an excalpatory word. The thing was my earliest attempt at 'poetry always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine,' which I have since written according to a scheme less extravagant and scale less impracticable than were ventured upon in this crude preliminary sketch, — a sketch that, on reviewal, appears not altogether wide of some hint of the characteristic features of that particular *dramatis persona* it would fain have reproduced: good draughtsmanship, however, and right handling were far beyond the artist at that time. London, Dec. 25, 1867. R. B."

In his final revised edition of twenty years later, Browning added to this preface a few words explaining that he had revised the poem somewhat. "I have simply removed solecisms, mended the metre a little, and endeavored to strengthen the phraseology."

142. *His award:* from here on to line 229 is an enthusiastic acknowledgment of Shelley's influence on the poet. For an account of Browning's first acquaintance with Shelley, see Biographical Introduction. For other allusions to Shelley in this poem, compare lines 404 fol., 556 fol., 1020 fol.

151. *Sun-treader:* a particularly appropriate epithet for Shelley, whose imagery as well as whose ideals were of the air rather than of the earth, and who may have been said to tread the upper spaces like the sun.

321. *A god wandering after beauty:* this suggests the myth of Apollo seeking Daphne. See King's Ovid, "Metamorphoses," i. 554.

322. *A giant standing vast in the sunset:* Atlas, who stood in the far west bearing on his shoulders the

vault of heaven. See King's Ovid, "Metamorphoses," iv. 744.

323. *Old hunter talking with gods:* possibly Peleus, who went on the Calydonian Hunt, and at whose wedding to the sea-nymph Thetis all the gods were present. Thetis afterwards made him an immortal god. See Euripides, "Andromache."

324. *High-crested chief sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos:* after the fall of Troy many of the Greek chiefs, among them Nestor, set sail for home, while others, at the desire of Agamemnon, remained behind to sacrifice to Pallas. Those who set sail went to the island of Tenedos, where they made offerings to the gods. See Bryant's "Odyssey of Homer," iii. 200.

331. *Dim clustered isles in the blue sea:* the clusters of islands in the Ægean Sea, east of Greece.

334. *Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed:* Hermes, son of Zeus and Maia, herald of the gods, whose office it was to carry the shades of the dead to Hades, and who had winged sandals. See Æschylus, "Choephoræ," 136; Ovid, "Metamorphoses," ii. 862.

335. *Who bound my forehead with Proserpine's hair:* Proserpine, or Persephone, death-bringer, the queen of Pluto, with whom she reigned over the lower world. See Homer, "Odyssey," x. 608.

403. *White Way:* the broad, irregular, luminous zone in the heavens, supposed to be made up of innumerable fixed stars, called the Milky Way, or the Galaxy.

404. *Not so much on a system as a man:* a reference, according to Mrs. Orr, to Plato, to whom there is another reference at line 436. The description, however, appears to fit Shelley better than Plato, both as to the personality described and from the fact that the speaker "gathers sense" from words "song inwoven." It also chimes in well with Browning's estimate of the noblest characteristic of Shelley's poetry, as "a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal," explained in his

essay on Shelley, and there is also a close accordance with the closing passage of that essay where Browning speaks of "the signal service it was the dream of [his] boyhood to render to [Shelley's] fame and memory."

435. *Who lived with Plato and who had the key to life:* Plato, a celebrated Greek philosopher (429–347 B. C.). In his "Republic" he presents an ideal State which is supposed to solve the problem of perfect living. Plato's "system" seems to have been a secondary influence following that of the "man," Shelley.

479. *As Arab birds float sleeping in the wind:* the pelican, which is one of the birds to be found in Arabia, frequently, in latitudes far from land, continues its flight all night, often floating for a long time without moving its wings. Or, perhaps, the Birds of Paradise, which were fabled to have no legs, and which therefore never settled. They were regarded as aerial sylphs, whose home was the bright expanse of sky where all the functions of life were carried on; they never touched the earth, and their food was the morning's dew.

527. *One branch from the gold-forest*, etc.: in the Æneid it is described how Æneas found a golden bough which the Cumæan Sibyl told him he would have to bring as an offering to Proserpine if he wished to be admitted to visit Hades. Perhaps Browning had this in mind. See Book vi.

567. *That king treading the purple calmly to his death:* Agamemnon, King of Mycenæ and Argos and commander-in-chief of the Greek forces in the Trojan war. After the ruin of Troy, Cassandra fell to his lot, and in vain warned him that he would be murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra. See Potter's Æschylus, "Agamemnon," 1017; also Browning's translation of "Agamemnon."

572. *And him sitting alone in blood while friends are hunting far in the sunshine:* possibly Actæon, who was torn to pieces by his own dogs in a hunt as a punishment for having accidentally come upon Diana bathing. See Ovid, "Metamorphoses," 3.

573. *And the boy with his white breast and brow and clustering curls*, etc.: Orestes, who avenged the death of his father, Agamemnon, by killing his mother, Clytemnestra. See Potter's Æschylus, "Choephoræ," 1073.

656. *Andromeda:* Cepheus was ordered by an oracle to sacrifice his daughter Andromeda to a sea-monster, in order to appease the sea-nymphs, who were offended at her mother, Cassiopea, because she strove to set her beauty above theirs. She was rescued by Perseus. The Andromeda described, says Mrs. Orr, is that of Polidoro di Caravaggio, of which Browning possessed an engraving which was always before his eyes as he wrote his earlier poems. The original was painted on the wall of a garden attached to the Palazzo Bufalo, or del Bufalo, in Rome. The wall has been pulled down since Browning was last there. See also Ovid, "Metamorphoses," iv. 792.

761. *Lymph:* water.

964. *The fair pale sister, went to her chill grave:* Antigone, who preferred the sentence of being buried alive to obeying Creon's decree forbidding her to bury her brother. See Sophocles, "Antigone," 760.

Paracelsus.

Paracelsus. Broadly speaking, the figure of Paracelsus stands for a transitional stage in the search for knowledge between the magical methods of the Middle Ages and the scientific methods of the present. He hopes to find through the study of phenomena the principles and sources of phenomena. Though his desire to reach ultimate causes could not be realized, his methods open the way to a more accurate study of phenomena.

Part I. In loving converse with his two friends, Paracelsus talks, on the eve of his departure in quest of knowledge, of his boundless aspirations, and justifies himself for his course against the doubts and discouragements of Festus. It appears from the conversation that Paracelsus

had in his youth eagerly sought the knowledge of the schools until he becomes aware of its futility as having any end beyond itself, or as contributing in any way to the welfare of mankind. He is possessed by the idea that he has been chosen by God to attain true knowledge by methods different from theirs, and in that knowledge find the good of man. He would dispense with the wisdom of the past and the lore of the adepts in magic and the black arts, and, wandering up and down the world, would, God-directed, wrest from nature the secret of life. For this service he would take no reward of praise or love. Festus is in sympathy with his high hopes, but mistrusts his methods. He would have Paracelsus trust to the wisdom of the sages rather than upon knowledge he can individually gain from nature. He questions whether Paracelsus has not rather a wild desire for the distinction of being thus chosen by God than any certainty that he has been chosen, and declares that the throwing off of human aid and the indifference to love is a blotch for which strange punishments will follow. To all these doubts Paracelsus replies with the assurance of one convinced of the sacred character of his intuition, and ends the discussion with the statement of his belief that truth is indwelling in all human souls, and knowledge the setting free of the truth, rather than the breaking in of light from without. To discover how by means of the sacred knowledge dispersed about the world the truth within the soul of all alike may be set free and the whole race elevated at once, is the aim of Paracelsus.

II. Paracelsus is discovered at the house of a Greek conjurer, in whose book he has written down his life. Having devoted himself steadily to his chosen aim, he has accumulated much knowledge, but the secret, the source of knowledge, remains as far off as ever, and in despair he has begun to consult with jugglers and astrologers, though scorning himself for so doing. He wishes he might discover some secret such as the alchemists sought, gold or the elixir of life, in order that he

might prove the purity and supremacy of his aim by casting it from him. Yet he begs God to kill him rather than let him lose faith in the power of his own mind. Then the poet Aprile appears, tells Paracelsus he has aspired to love infinitely, — to be the artist, the musician, the poet, who would transmute all life and nature into beautiful forms of art for love of mankind. He, too, had failed, because beauty in its completeness being beyond his human power to grasp, he wavered between singling out some one form to present in fulness to mankind, and his love for all the other forms of beauty, peers of any he might choose, and ends in doing nothing. He hails Paracelsus as king, unconscious evidently of his failure, and Paracelsus realizes that his schemes for the welfare of mankind have lacked the quality of love. It does not seem clear that Aprile attributed his own failure, as Paracelsus does, to the fact that he did not recognize knowledge in his ideal. He seems rather to attribute it to his attempt to love with a completeness only possible to God.

III. Paracelsus has become a professor at Basel when he meets and talks again with Festus, who glories in the success, as it appears to him, of his friend. After much talk, Paracelsus makes Festus understand that he has failed utterly in his ultimate aim, the discovery of absolute truth. He has decided, influenced by Aprile, to give what he can to men in the learning he *has* gained, though his scorn of his hearers precludes the idea that he is really actuated by love. He will live his life as if it were a task to be fulfilled, expecting at any time that his followers will turn against him because of his innovations upon the old methods. In spite of the fact that he is convinced of the futility of his search for absolute knowledge, the ideal has taken such hold of him that he feels he may return to the search since he has lost all part in the human qualities of love, hope, fear, faith.

IV. The expected reaction against him having come, Paracelsus declares to Festus his intention of again going

on his old quest. Only now he will seek knowledge in every experience life has to offer, no matter how evil. His mood varies between reckless belief in himself, sneering scorn of his enemies, and self-depreciation, while through it all Festus still has faith in him. In the lyric "Over the Sea our Galleys went," he symbolizes the fact that he is too closely wedded to his old ideal — the attainment of knowledge — to attune his life to any other, even though recognizing its hopelessness.

V. Festus is watching by the bedside of Paracelsus as he lies dying. At first wandering in his mind, he gradually regains, under the loving ministrations of Festus, his clearness of vision, and breaks forth in an inspired presentation of his philosophy of life as now developed by his experiences. It includes the scientific idea of the gradual development of forms until man is reached, and the religious idea of the whole course of life being directed by the love of God, who himself feels infinite joy in his own manifestations. In man begins the fresh evolution of knowledge and love, and, consciousness being born, the beauty of nature is no longer in vain. But after man has been perfected, there will be a fresh development Godwards, and so on successive phases will ever open fresh vistas of new joy. All this Paracelsus has learned through Aprile, who taught him the worth of love and the value of human limitations, how all strivings of the human soul, however weak and miserable, are intrinsically precious, and that the guiding principle of life is love, which will grow in power and beauty as it is strengthened by knowledge.

The sketch which Browning himself gives of the life of Paracelsus is very unsatisfactory, as it shows only an external view of him. For further information upon this subject Dr. Franz Hartmann's "The Life of Paracelsus" should be consulted; also articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" on Paracelsus, Alchemy, Chemistry, Medicine, Surgery, Pathology, and Mysticism. George Willis Cooke calls attention to the fact that M. Jules Andrieu

and Mr. Charles Kingsley both consider Browning's poem a true and sympathetic interpretation of the genius and character of Paracelsus, of whom it has been said that his enemies unstintedly maligned him as a demon, while disciples and friends adored him as a god.

I. **Paracelsus Aspires.** *Würzburg:* an ancient and historically important town in Germany.

232. *Einsiedeln:* a town in Canton Schwyz, Switzerland, thirty miles from Zurich, where Paracelsus was born.

241. *Trithemius:* Johann, Abbot of St. Jacob at Würzburg (1461–1516), one of the greatest adepts in magic, alchemy, and astrology, and the teacher of Paracelsus.

347. *Geier-eagle:* vulture-eagle, mentioned in Leviticus xi. 18.

357. *Black Arts:* black magic or sorcery, as opposed to white magic or science.

417. *Stagirite:* Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, who was born at Stagira in Macedon (384–323 B. C.).

481. *Riveled:* wrinkled. — *Burgonet:* a kind of helmet.

801. *Twine amaranth:* the amaranth was a sacred plant among the Greeks and Romans; from the former it received its name, which means "never fading." Hence it became an emblem of immortality, and was classed among the funeral flowers. Homer describes the Thessalians as wearing crowns of amaranth at the funeral of Achilles. Paracelsus means here that he will crown life with immortality instead of death.

811. *Mayne:* same as the Main, an important river in Germany which flows into the Rhine, and on which Würzburg stood.

812. *Schistous ore:* admitting of division by natural cleavage into slabs, slates, or flags.

II. **Paracelsus Attains.** *Constantinople:* many astrologers practised their art in this Eastern city.

6. *Like a Turk verse along a scimitar:* verses of the

Koran are used by the Arabs in the decoration of their walls, pottery, arms, etc.

25. *Genethliac:* a caster of horoscopes.

265. *Fire-labarum . . . founder of these walls:* Constantine the "Great," the founder of Constantinople, when he was going to fight against Maxentius in 312, saw a flaming cross in the heavens with the inscription *In hoc signo vinces* (Under this sign thou shalt conquer). He became a convert to Christianity and obtained an easy victory. He adopted the cross as his standard, calling it *labarum*, from *lavar*, "command." In form his standard was a long pike, having a transverse beam to which was attached a silken veil wrought with images of the monarch and his children. On the top was a crown of gold enclosing the mysterious monogram representing the cross, with the initial letters of the name of Christ.

453. *Wyvern:* a kind of flying serpent, sometimes represented in coats of arms.

III. Paracelsus. 100. *Gannet:* a sea-fowl allied to the pelican.

128. *Pansies:* these were said to be favorite flowers of Paracelsus.

152. *Basil:* same as Basle, situated on the Swiss bank of the Rhine.

211. *Rhasis:* or Rhazes, a famous Arabian physician, died at Bagdad about 932.

293. *Œcolampadius:* John, a celebrated German divine, who taught at Basle, and exhorted the Swiss to embrace the principles of the Reformation, though he afterwards joined with Zwingli against Luther. See Browning's own note (4).

294. *Castellanus:* Pierre Duchatel, a French prelate. When he was at Basle he corrected proof with Frobenius, a position procured for him by Erasmus.

295. *Munsterus:* a celebrated scholar who among other things taught Hebrew and theology at Basle, and adopted the tenets of Luther (1490–1525). — *Frobenius:* a German printer who lived at Basle, and was greatly

esteemed by Erasmus, whose works he printed. (Died 1527.)

391. *Rear-mice:* leather-winged bats who evidently hung themselves as bats do on the old gate.

394. *Lachen:* a village on the shore of Lake Zurich.

437. *Sudary:* handkerchief or napkin.

441. *Suffumigation:* in medicine, the application of smoke to the body as a cure.

446. *Would raise a cross-grained devil in my sword:* this sword is described in "Hudibras" (part ii. canto 3):

> "Bumbastus kept a devil's bird
> Shut in the pummel of his sword,
> That taught him all the cunning pranks
> Of past and future mountebanks."

Dr. Berdoe calls attention to the fact that Naudæus (in his "History of Magic") observes of this familiar spirit, "that though the alchymists maintain that it was the secret of the philosopher's stone, yet it were more rational to believe that, if there was anything in it, it was certainly two or three doses of his laudanum, which he never went without, because he did strange things with it, and used it as a medicine to cure almost all diseases." See Browning's own note (5).

480. *Erasmus:* the illustrious Dutch writer, was in Basle in 1514, when he prepared for the press his "New Testament" and "Epistles of Jerome." He was attracted thither by the fame of the printing-press of Frobenius.

481. *Frobenius . . . and him "I raised . . . from the dead":* Paracelsus cured him of the gout with laudanum.

741. *A sick wretch describes the ape,* etc.: patients suffering from delirium frequently see the figure of some animal mocking them from the foot of the bed.

802. *Spain's cork-groves:* the cork-oak (*Quercus suber*) is found abundantly in Catalonia and Valencia in Spain.

867. *Præclare! Optime!* Bravo! well done!

907. *Ulysses' bow, Achilles' shield:* for description of Ulysses' bow, see Homer, "Odyssey," book xxi.; for

description of Achilles' shield, see Homer, "Iliad," book xviii.

946. *Aëtius:* an Arian doctor, skilful in medical disputation, died at Constantinople in 367. — *Oribasius:* court physician of Julian the Apostate (326–403). — *Galen:* celebrated Greek physician (130–200). — *Rhasis:* see note III. 211.

947. *Serapion:* an Alexandrian physician of the eleventh century. — *Avicenna:* an Arabian philosopher and physician (born about 980), whose doctrines combined those of Galen and Aristotle. — *Averröes:* an Arabian philosopher and physician (born at Cordova, 1126). He interpreted the Aristotelian philosophy to the Mohammedans.

955. *Zuinglius:* the "reformer of Switzerland," who also had a controversy with Luther. See Browning's own note (4).

961. *Carolostadius:* or Carlstadt, one of the first Reformers. He was the leader of the fanatical sect of iconoclasts at Wittemberg, was banished, and died at Basle in 1541.

993. *These gangs of peasants . . . from Suabia . . . whom Münzer leads:* Münzer was a Reformer of the type of the Christian socialist, and opposed both to the friars and the humanists. In 1524 he was in Thuringia and in South Germany. Wherever he went his Christian socialism was welcomed by the oppressed peasantry, who were encouraged to rise in the insurrection which ended so disastrously for them at Mühlhausen in 1525 (1490–1525).

IV. Paracelsus Aspires. 1. *Oporinus:* the most renowned of the followers of Paracelsus, his secretary for three years, afterwards professor of the Greek language, and a well-known printer and bookseller. Oporinus is said to have spoken bitterly of Paracelsus because he was reticent about his secrets. But after the death of Paracelsus he regretted his unkindness. See Browning's own note (5). — *Sic itur ad astra:* Such is the way to the stars.

5. *Liechtenfels:* Canon Cornelius of Liechtenfels was

dying from gout, and Paracelsus cured him by giving him two small pills. The canon had promised Paracelsus a large fee but when he got well the fee was refused, and although Paracelsus brought suit he could not recover it. See Browning's own note (6).

115. *Quid multa:* why many words.

190. *Cassia:* a kind of cinnamon.

191. *Labdanum:* or *ladanum;* a fragrant, resinous exudation from the plants *Cystus creticus* and *Cystus ladaniferus.* — *Aloe-balls:* balls of the fragrant resin of the agalloch or lign-aloe.

192. *Nard:* the fragrant spikenard, an oil made from a species of valerian.

310. *Fiat experientia corpore vili:* Let the experiment be made on a body of no value.

672. *I have no julep:* Dr. Berdoe says, in his "Paracelsus the Reformer of Medicine": "It does not appear from his writings that he thought it possible to render the physical body immortal."

V. **Paracelsus Attains.** *Salzburg:* old city in Austria, eighty-seven miles southeast of Munich. According to one account of his death, Paracelsus was attacked by hired assassins as he was leaving a banquet at the Prince's house, and died in a small room at the Inn of the White Horse, but he was buried in the graveyard of St. Sebastian.

123. *Jove strikes the Titans down:* the Titans were the giants who aided Kronos in his war against Jove; they were conquered and consigned to the yawning cave of Tartarus.

126. *Phaeton:* a son of Apollo, asked his father to allow him to drive his chariot for one day. It proved to be more than he could manage, and in order to stop the havoc he was causing, Jupiter launched a thunderbolt against him, and struck him at the same moment from his seat and from existence. See Ovid, "Metamorphoses," 2.

187. *Persic Zoroaster:* the great teacher and founder of the national religion of the Perso-Iranian people. He founded the wisdom of the Magi. The bible of the Zoroastrians is the "Zend Avesta" (589-513 B. C.).

680. *Thus he dwells in all:* from here down to "*Man begins anew a tendency to God*," as pointed out by Dr. Berdoe, is a faithful representation of the teaching of the Kabbalah (see *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xiii. p. 812, last ed.): "The whole universe, however, was incomplete, and did not receive its finishing stroke till man was formed, who is the acme of the creation and the microcosm. 'Man is both the import and the highest degree of creation, for which reason he was formed on the sixth day. As soon as man was created everything was complete, including the upper and nether worlds, for everything is comprised in man. He unites in himself all forms'" (*Zohar*, iii. 48).

Pippa Passes.

Pippa Passes. Introduction: Pippa in her bedroom looks forward to her only holiday of the year, hoping it will be good to her, for it is all she has; though it would make no difference whether the day were fair or not to those above her like Sebald and Ottima, Jules and Phene, etc., their lives being already full of happiness. Then she imagines herself successively in the places of all these happy ones of Asolo whose love she would experience, but decides that best of all is God's love, in which even she can share.

I. Morning: Sebald and Ottima talk feverishly about the crime they have just committed in the murder of Ottima's husband, Luca, and recall various scenes in the growth of their passion. Sebald is suffering from a revulsion of feeling, and is already conscience-stricken at his deed, while Ottima tries to turn his attention away from Luca to herself. She has just succeeded in winning him when Pippa passes singing "God's in his Heaven." Sebald is disillusionized, turns from Ottima and kills himself, while Ottima, also intending to die, prays God to be merciful to him, not her. Pippa next passes a group of art students who are discussing a trick they have played on Jules, a brother artist, whom they hate evidently because of his

superiority. They have trapped him into marrying the supposed Greek girl Phene, an ordinary model, by sending him letters purporting to be from a charming and distinguished young woman who has seen his work at the Academy, and writes to him of her admiration for it.

II. Noon: Jules and Phene alone; he in an ecstasy of love and happiness, which astonishes and exalts her. She is so happy in his love that she hesitates to speak the speech the students have taught her with the purpose of revealing to Jules the trick. But she remembers they had all called themselves Jules's friends, and Natalia said harm would come if she did not recite it. So she recites it, explaining, however, as she goes on, the instructions she had received. Jules, chagrined and disgusted, is about to cast her off and seek vengeance upon Lutwyche, when Pippa passes, singing the page's song to Queen Catarina Cornaro. He changes his mind, decides to cherish her whose soul will be born through his love, to let revenge go, and seek a new life in Phene's land of Greece. Pippa next passes Bluphocks and two or three of the Austrian police. Bluphocks hints that the Bishop's Intendant has offered him money to entrap Pippa. The police are mildly interested in the fact that Luca Gaddi's house has been closed all the morning, and more interested in watching for Luigi, whom they have been ordered to arrest under certain conditions.

III. Evening: Luigi and his mother talk in the Turret. She is trying to persuade him not to carry out his purpose of assassinating the king. He is proof against all arguments, but is touched at the thought of a girl whom his mother reminds him is to visit them in June, but Pippa passes and sings a song which strengthens his wavering intentions. Pippa next comes to some poor girls chattering together and lying in wait for her, whom they have been instructed to try to entice toward ruin.

IV. Night: The Monsignor is talking with the Intendant inside the cathedral palace. It comes out that Pippa is the child of the Monsignor's eldest brother, to whom his

estates should have gone. A younger brother had, however, engaged the Intendant to murder the infant. The Monsignor now desires, he declares, to right as much of the wrong as he can by taking away from the Intendant all the gifts he had received for his services for the benefit, of course, of the church. The Intendant informs him, for his own ends, that the child had not been murdered, but that he is already arranging to have her seduced, which will be equivalent to death. The Monsignor, with his eye on his brother's estates, wavers, but Pippa passes singing, his better impulses triumph, and he has the Intendant arrested. Unconscious of all the dangers she has passed through, and of the influence she has had, Pippa returns to her room at night not much cheered by her holiday, and wondering if she could ever touch nearly the lives of those people in whose places she has been imagining herself.

Introduction. *Asolo* is a small walled town known to the ancients as Ascelum. It is situated on a hill in the province of Treviso, and is a little over thirty miles from Venice. It has the ruins of a Roman aqueduct and an old cathedral, and is famous now for its culture and manufacture of silk. This picturesque town was a favorite with Browning. He visited it in his youth and returned to it in his old age, giving its name to his last volume of poems, "Asolando."

88. *Martagon:* a kind of lily (*Lilium Martagon*). It has a panicle of rather small but showy light violet-purple or flesh-colored flowers, dotted with small brown-purple spots. Common name, Turk's cap.

89. *St. Agnes:* a virgin martyr of the fourth century, very beautiful and admired by all the noble youth of Rome. But she determined to become the bride of Christ. See Keats, "The Eve of St. Agnes."

90. *Turk bird's:* Browning evidently remembered that turkeys were so called because they were supposed to come from Turkey, and so used "Turk bird" for "turkey."

100. *Weevil and chafer:* small insects of the beetle family; the chafer is also called cock-chafer and May-bug.

131. *Possagno church:* this church was designed by Canova, who was born at Possagno. It is in the form of a circular temple, and has an altar-piece by him. His tomb is also there.

213. *Cicala:* Italian for "cicada." Known as the locust. The male has the power of making a shrill grating sound by means of special organs under the abdomen.

I. **Morning.** 28. *St. Mark's:* the cathedral at Venice, thirty miles away.

29. *Vicenza:* a town twenty-five miles to the southwest of Asolo.

30. *Padua:* a town about twenty-five miles south of Asolo.

58. *Duomo:* cathedral, in the centre of the town.

59. *Capuchin:* a branch of the Franciscan order of monks established by Saint Francis in the thirteenth century. They wear a brown habit.

76. *Proof mark:* the sign on a print which shows whether it is among the first impressions from the plate. The first few which are the best are often signed in autograph by the etcher or engraver.

119. *He is turned:* it is a well-known superstition that the face of a murdered man always looks skyward for vengeance.

170. *Campanula:* bell-flower or harebell, a large genus of flowers with bell-shaped corollas. The Latin name means "a little bell."

297. *Trieste:* a city of Italy on a gulf of the same name at the northwestern extremity of the Adriatic.

304. *Æsculapius*, etc.: the god of Medicine. These wicked students are laughing at Giovacchino for having run away from love as if it could be cured by treatment like a disease, and they propose his love poem should be an epic with Æsculapius for the hero, with catalogues of drugs for his cure.

313. *Et canibus nostris*, etc.: and to our dogs. See Virgil, Eclogues, iii. 67.

319. *In a tale:* bound to tell the same story.

380. *Psiche-fanciulla:* this is considered one of the finest of Canova's works, and represents Psyche as a young girl with a butterfly. It is in the gallery at Possagno.

385. *Pietà:* a statue of the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ in her arms in the church at Possagno.

405. *Malamocco:* an island near Venice, with a small town of the same name on it.

406. *Alciphron:* a Grecian philosopher who lived in the time of Alexander the Great. He wrote some epistles which give a curious view of Greek manners. "Hair like sea-moss" is evidently a quotation from him.

411. *Lire:* the lira is an Italian coin equal to about twenty cents.

413. *Tydeus:* a son of Œneus, king of Calydon, and one of the heroes of the Theban war. See Æschylus, "Seven against Thebes," 391 (Plumptre's translation). — *Academy:* of Fine Arts in Venice.

417. *Fenice:* Phenix, a leading theatre in Venice.

439. *Hannibal Scratchy:* a burlesque spelling of Annibale Caracci, the famous Italian painter.

II. Noon. 26. *Psyche:* the daughter of a king, and so beautiful that Venus hated her, and when Cupid fell in love with her, persecuted her. The lovers were finally united, and Psyche became immortal.

39. *Minion:* a favorite. — *Coluthus . . . Bessarion's scribe:* Coluthus was a Greek epic poet of the sixth century, a native of Lycopolis in Egypt. His poem on the "Rape of Helen" was discovered by Bessarion, a learned Greek cardinal of the fifteenth century, and Jules evidently has an illuminated copy of this made by Bessarion's scribe.

40. *Bistre:* dark brown paint made from the soot of wood.

46. *He said, and on Antinous directed:* see Bryant, "Odyssey of Homer," xxii. 10. Antinous was the first of Penelope's suitors to meet his fate.

50. *Almaign Kaiser:* German Emperor.

54. *Hippolyta:* Queen of the Amazons.

59. *Thunder-free:* a crown of laurel or bay was anciently supposed to be a protection against lightning.

61. *Hipparchus:* son of Pisistratus and tyrant of Athens. He was slain by Harmodius and Aristogeiton, B. C. 514. Their deed formed a favorite subject of drinking-songs, of which the most famous and popular is preserved in full by Athenæus. It begins thus (Denman's translation): —

> "I'll wreathe my sword in myrtle-bough,
> The sword that laid the tyrant low,
> When patriots, burning to be free,
> To Athens gave equality."

The daggers with which the tyrant was killed were concealed in the myrtle-branches borne by the assassins at the festival of the Panathenæa. All these ideas are brought out in the group of statuary as Jules describes it to Phene.

75. *Parsley crowns:* the leaves of a species of parsley (*Apium graveolens*, our celery), much used by the ancients in garlands on account of their strong fragrance, especially in drinking-bouts.

92. *Dryad:* a wood nymph.

258. *Kate the Queen:* Caterina Cornaro, born in Venice about 1454, was the daughter of Marco Cornaro, a wealthy and noble citizen. She married James Lusignan, King of Cyprus, after having been adopted by the Venetian Senate as a daughter of the republic. After the King's death she became Queen of Cyprus, but her reign was much troubled by other claimants to the throne. Venice, at first giving her its protection, finally forced her to abdicate, and took possession of Cyprus. Her abdication was attended with great ceremony; and everywhere, on her journey from Cyprus to Venice, she was received with acclamation. Upon her arrival at Venice, the Doge and Senate received her with great honor, and assigned her, for a dwelling, the Château-fort of Asolo, in the province of Trévise. At Asolo, Caterina formed a little court,

"wielded her little sceptre for her people's good, and won their love by gentleness and grace." Died in Venice, 1510. See H. F. Brown, "Venetian Studies."

270. *Jesses:* straps of leather or silk, fitted round the legs of a hawk, to which the line held in the falconer's hand is attached.

306. *Ancona:* a town on the east coast of Italy.

328. *Bluphocks:* Browning added a foot-note to this character which we print here. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It seems to be a suggestion to the reader that he must judge this evil being as leniently as he can. The name is said to stand for "Blue Fox," and is a skit at the Edinburgh Review, which is bound in a cover of blue and fox.

330. *Intendant:* the superintendent who has charge of the estates just inherited by the bishop.

336. *Grig:* a cricket.

338. *Armenian:* the Armenian Church is a split from the Roman Catholic, and has its own pope.

339. *Koenigsberg:* a city in the eastern part of Prussia.

340. *Prussia Improper:* Prussia Proper was the name given to the arm of land bounded on the north by the Baltic and on the south by Poland, to distinguish it from the other provinces of the kingdom.

342. *Chaldee:* parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra were written in Chaldee, a Semitic dialect.

349. *Syriac:* from the third to the eighth century, Syriac was the common language of Western Asia. It now only exists as an ecclesiastical language in the Syrian churches. — *Vowels:* it has five vowels, represented by the Greek vowels inverted.

350. *Celarent, Darii, Ferio:* these words are in the first of five lines used mnemonically by logicians to designate the nineteen valid forms of the syllogism.

354. *Posy:* a contraction of "poesy," a motto or rhyme.

356. *How to Jonah*, etc.: it was to Tarshish, not to Nineveh, that Jonah was to go. Jonah i.

357. *How the angel*, etc.: Numbers xxii. 22 fol.

363. *Bishop Beveridge:* Calvinist divine and author (1626–1707).

365. *Charon's wherry:* the shades of the dead were carried by Charon, son of Erebus, in his boat across the river Styx in the lower world. The ferry was paid with an obolus (a small Athenian coin) placed in the mouth of the corpse before burial.

367. *Hecate's supper:* Hecate was the name of Diana in the under world. She was a goddess of terrible aspect, and much feared, but was thought to be propitiated by frequent gifts of food put at the cross-roads.

370. *Zwanzigers:* an Austrian silver coin worth about fifteen cents.

379. *Prince Metternich:* a distinguished Austrian statesman, who was especially disliked by the Italian patriots (1773–1859).

387. *Panurge consults Hertrippa:* Panurge is one of the important characters in Rabelais' romance of Gargantua and Pantagruel. He consults Hertrippa, philosopher, magician, and physician, in regard to his marriage.

388. *King Agrippa:* Acts xxvi. 27.

407. *Deposed:* an obsolete form of "deposited."

408. *Visa:* an endorsement made by the police upon a passport after they have examined it and found it correct.

412. *Carbonari:* a secret organization which was working to liberate Italy from Austria's grasp.

414. *Spielberg:* originally the citadel of Brunn in Moravia, afterwards turned into a terrible Austrian prison.

III. **Evening.** 6. *Lucius Junius:* Lucius Junius Brutus, leader of the revolt which drove the Tarquins out and established the Roman republic (509 B. C.).

14. *Old Franz:* Francis I., Emperor of Austria.

19. *Pellicos:* Silvio Pellico, an Italian patriot, and a member of the secret society of the Carbonari. He was

arrested and imprisoned for eleven years, first in Santa Margherita in Milan, then in I Piombi, at Venice, and finally in the Spielberg.

99. *Coppice:* a copse or wood of small growth.

122. *Andrea . . . Pier, Gualtier:* these were all former conspirators against the Austrian yoke.

135. *How first the Austrians got these provinces:* the Austrian armies gained possession of the greater part of Northern Italy in the summer of 1813. Concession after concession was made by the Congress of Vienna, until by 1815 the provinces all fell under the control of Austria.

148. "*I am the bright and morning-star*": Revelation xxii. 16.

150. *The gift of the morning-star:* Revelation ii. 28.

163. *The Titian at Treviso:* in the Annunziata chapel of the cathedral at Treviso is an altar-piece by Titian.

209. *Python:* the dragon which guarded the oracle of Delphi. He lived in the caves of Mt. Parnassus, but was slain by Apollo. Since used of any dragon, and as a symbol of evil.

236. *Fig-peckers:* a species of bird, so-called because it lives upon figs.

237. *Lampreys:* eel-like fish, at one time considered great delicacies, and still eaten in Europe. — *Breganze-wine:* made at Breganza, a village twelve miles north of Vicenza.

251. *Deuzans:* a variety of apple. — *Junetings:* an early apple. — *Leather-coats:* an apple with a tough skin. The golden russet is so called.

293. *Ortolans:* a singing bird about the size of the lark, found in Europe, and regarded as a great delicacy. See Prologue to "Ferishtah's Fancies."

295. *Polenta:* a kind of Italian pudding made of corn-meal.

IV. Night. 4. *Benedicto benedicatur:* a form of blessing.

9. *Messina:* a large seaport town of Sicily.

10. *Assumption Day:* a celebration is held on the fifteenth of August in honor of the miraculous ascent of the

Virgin Mary into heaven. The first record of the incident is made by Gregory of Tours.

18. *Ascoli, Fermo and Fossombruno:* all towns situated in the so-called "Marches" of Italy.

58. *Correggio:* Antonio Allegri da Correggio, celebrated for his beautiful frescos in the church of San Giovanni and those on the dome of the cathedral at Parma.

81. *Podere:* Italian name for a farm or small landed property.

90. *Forli:* a walled city of Italy, about forty miles southeast of Bologna.

93. *Cesena:* a small town about twelve miles from Forli.

115. *Soldo:* the Italian copper penny, equal to the French *sou*.

120. *Millet-cake:* a cake made of a kind of small grain that grows in Italy, eaten by the poorest classes.

126. *Poderi:* plural of *podere*.

227. *The seven and one:* the Pleiades are called "The Seven Stars." The "one" is probably Aldebaran (the follower), so called because it follows upon the Pleiades. It is in the group known as the Hyades, which with the Pleiades forms part of the constellation Taurus.

237. *Miserere mei, Domine:* Be merciful to me, O Lord.

240. *Dray:* a nest, usually that of a squirrel.

250. *Hedge-shrew:* a field-mouse. — *Lob-worm:* resembles an earth-worm, though it is larger.

326. *Mavis, merle and throstle:* the mavis is the English song-thrush, the throstle is also a member of the thrush family; the merle is the English blackbird.

329. *Howlet:* another form of *owlet*.

330. *Chantry:* a private chapel.

332. *Full complines:* the last division of the Roman Catholic breviary is called the compline.

333. *Cowls and twats:* Dr. Furnivall explains that Browning got the word *twats* from the Royalist rhymes

entitled "Vanity of Vanities," on Sir Harry Vane's picture, in which he is charged with being a Jesuit.

> "'Tis said they will give him a cardinal's hat:
> They sooner will give him an old nun's twat."

"The word struck me," Browning says, "as a distinctive part of a nun's attire that might fitly pair off with the cowl appropriated to a monk."

King Victor and King Charles.

First Year: King Victor. Part I. Polyxena and Charles talk over the situation at court. Charles recalls how differently his father had treated his favorite son Philip from the way in which he had treated himself, how he hoped when Victor's ambition for kingship had been gratified, that, released from absorption in state affairs, he would take to loving him, but, as a matter of fact, his harshness had redoubled. Polyxena tries to comfort him, by assuring him the life must change, and by encouraging him as to his powers in statecraft. D'Ormea enters and summons Charles to the King, throws out hints as to the unsettled state of affairs in the kingdom, as he reminds Charles significantly that he is not the King. Charles suspects from this that plots are being hatched to prove him incapable of succeeding his father. Polyxena doubts whether Charles is right in his conjectures, but concludes he may be, if Victor desires to make the child of his mistress his heir.

Part II. King Victor makes preparations for his abdication, during which he reveals that his reason for shifting the responsibility of the government upon his son is in order to save himself from the difficulties into which he has plunged himself. He thinks, too, that by handing D'Ormea over to his son, the blame will fall upon the minister's shoulders. D'Ormea objects to this great injustice to himself, and hopes Charles will have sufficient

discretion to refuse the crown. Charles comes before his father with his mind fully made up that his father is about to cast him off; and at the first intimation that it is his father's intention to give him the crown, Charles thinks it a trap to entice him into showing a wish to usurp his father's place, and he indignantly refuses it, and is completely overcome when the King actually puts the crown on his head. Victor sees how advantageous the sincerity and honesty of Charles will be in getting him out of his difficulties, while D'Ormea rates him for his falseness, and insinuates that he intends to retake the crown as soon as Charles straightens out affairs. He declares that he will discover Charles to be a poor prop. Victor retorts that such a warning is merely a scheme to force him to change his mind in regard to giving up the crown, and orders that the act of abdication be completed. Polyxena hears the shouts for the new King, and thinks they are shouting because Charles has been disinherited. She is musing over the destruction of their hopes and upon their future life when Charles comes in crowned. He is full of gratitude to his father, but Polyxena immediately suspects a trap of some sort. Victor enters, and during his light easy talk Polyxena throws out two or three remarks intended to make Victor reveal himself in some way. She gets the clue when D'Ormea suggests that Count Tende means to take again his crown. Then she begs Victor to do so at once. Charles is outraged at Polyxena's action, and hastens to assure his father that he had not accused him of such a crime.

Second Year: King Charles. Part I. D'Ormea acquaints Polyxena with the fact that Victor is about to return and resume the throne, now that Charles has accomplished the pacification of the people and is on the eve of settling all foreign difficulties. At first Polyxena suspects the genuineness of D'Ormea. Then she listens to him because his news affects the safety of Charles. Charles comes in upon them joyous that he has at last completely cleared his father's name from obloquy. When D'Ormea ac-

quaints him that his father will now return to take the crown, Charles grows angry at him, tells him it must be proved or he will be thrown into prison, and turns against Polyxena for listening to D'Ormea and having any doubts of his father. As they retire, Victor appears, and from his talk his intentions are only too evident. Charles comes in upon his just-returned father as he is declaring all the papers incriminating Victor to be lies. This sudden return arouses the doubts and suspicions of Charles. Anxiously he questions his father, trying to convince himself that Victor has merely come to secure a change of residence, but he is obliged to realize what his father wants. He then refuses him the crown, which he declares he has sworn to keep, and politely dismisses him, in the mean time trying to shield his father from Polyxena and D'Ormea. He realizes, however, that this is useless, flings D'Ormea back his badge of office, and begs Polyxena not to praise him.

Part II. D'Ormea informs Charles of the plot of Victor to retake the crown by force. Charles pretends he does not believe it, but authorizes D'Ormea to arrest Victor, and if there be no truth in the report of the plot, D'Ormea's life will be forfeited.

After D'Ormea departs, Charles confesses to Polyxena that he was only acting before him, that he has known his father's intentions all along, and was always irritated that Polyxena should see through his character also. He declares that his father shall have the crown again, for he cannot fight against him. Polyxena tries in vain to convince Charles that it is his duty to keep the crown. Victor is brought in, and though under arrest he demands the crown, and Charles crowns him. The revulsion of feeling is so great when he learns that Charles is not going to insist on keeping the crown, as he feared, that he is suddenly seized with an attack of the heart, and as he dies Polyxena tells him that Charles's sole effort has been to act for Victor, though she, for this, counts him the worse.

The histories of Amadeus II. are somewhat confused

and contradictory. Browning seems to have chosen any incident which would best serve for artistic development without regard to absolute historical consistency. Victor was born in 1666, succeeded his father under the regency of his mother in 1675. After a warlike career he succeeded in building up for himself an independent kingdom. In 1713, by the treaty of Utrecht, Savoy was recognized as an independent state, and he was made King of Sicily, but soon exchanged it for Sardinia. According to Gallenga in his history of Piedmont, the later years of Victor were crowned with unprecedented prosperity, and his abdication was really due to weariness of the world and a doting fondness for his new bride, while his desire to return to rule was due to the *ennui* he suffered in his retreat at Chambéry and the ambition of the Marchioness, who had set her heart on being queen. When on a visit to Evian Baths with Polyxena, Charles heard that his father contemplated a journey to Turin, with a view to taking possession of the crown. Charles hurried home, reaching Rivoli before Victor. Victor pleaded as a reason for his return a desire to live in a more genial climate, and Charles expressed himself satisfied and gave him Moncaglieri. Victor's next move was to demand Del Borgo to deliver up the act of abdication. Del Borgo gave an evasive answer and told Charles, whose first impulse was to give up the crown. He called his ministers about him, and while they were deliberating, a note from St. Remy, commander of the citadel of Turin, announced to the King that Victor had come at midnight with a single aid-de-camp and demanded entrance to the citadel, which was refused. This settled the matter, and Charles signed the warrant for his father's arrest.

He was imprisoned in Rivoli, where on account of his violence he was rigorously treated for some time. But he became melancholy, and the rigor was relaxed, and finally the society of the Marchioness allowed him. Later, at his own request, he was returned to Moncaglieri, where he prepared for death, which overtook him in 1732,

at the age of sixty-six. Though he begged for a last interview with his son, the ministers advised against it. Charles could never speak of his father's last days without signs of the most painful emotion.

First Year: King Victor. Part I. 76. *Is it not like he'll love me at the last?* Voltaire says Victor had an oldest son who had all amiable qualities and a promise of brilliancy, and who died at seventeen. His death plunged his father into despair which threatened his life. However, his courage triumphed over grief. He occupied himself with his second son, whom until then he had neglected and treated even with hardness because his appearance was unprepossessing, and his natural sweetness and timidity were qualities opposed to the impetuous character of the King. He, however, gave great care to the instruction of this son, initiated him in all state affairs, and decided nothing without having discussed it with Prince Charles. But he continued to treat him with the same hardness, allowing him no liberty. (History of Louis XV.)

102. *Turin:* a city of Northern Italy, at this time the capital of the Sardinian dominions. It is situated in a beautiful plain on the Po, about eighty miles from Milan.

103. *Rivoli:* a small town, nine miles west of Turin.

211. *Spain entertains a project*, etc.: events having made it probable that the Bourbons would return to Italy again, Victor and all the other European cabinets became anxious at the prospect. Victor received propositions from both France and Austria to join with them in case of a rupture. After having wavered between them for some time, he finally made secret engagements with both. In June, 1730, he received from the Emperor of Austria a sum of money, with the promise that he and his descendants should be governors of Milan *in perpetuo* if he would never separate his interests from those of Austria. A few days after, the Spanish Minister, having had a secret audience with him, made him flattering offers, if he would declare himself for the Bourbons. He accepted this offer also, but at last, seeing that his intrigues were

about to be discovered, decided to abdicate, affecting a philosophic love of repose which was far from his character, as proved by his attempt later to remount the throne. (See "Historic Memoirs of the Royal House of Savoy," by Costa de Beauregard.)

King Victor. Part II. 38. *Annunziata:* an order of Knights instituted in 1360, by Amadeus VI., Duke of Savoy, raised in 1720 by Victor Amadeus to be the first order of the Kingdom of Savoy.

40. *Del Borgo:* Minister of Foreign Affairs. Blondel, who furnishes many glimpses of this time in his "Mémoires," says he "was intelligent, adroit for the interests of his master, dissimulating . . . always hoping to find some new advantage which he had not before perceived."

58. *When first I stumbled on you, Marquis:* Voltaire says, in a note to his History, that D'Ormea was a man without birth, whom Victor found in utter misery. This minister had rendered him the service of ending the differences with the Court of Rome, which had existed during a great part of his reign. He obtained for him a more favorable agreement than Victor had been able to obtain himself. Of him Blondel says, he had more mind, more transcendent qualities, above all, more audacity and confidence in himself, than any of the other ministers. "It is certain he had all the favor of King Victor. He had many enemies, having, while he was manager of the finances, brought about the reunion of the fiefs with the domaine, and treated with the Court of Rome. The nobility and the clergy hated him."

71. *Toulon:* a seaport of France, thirty-two miles east-southeast of Marseilles.

72. *Galliot:* a Dutch vessel carrying a main and a mizzen mast and a large mainsail.

164. *You resign the crown to me:* Beauregard gives this account of the scene between the father and son: "He called his son to him, and declared to him his design. The young prince, astonished, troubled, fearing

perhaps that this overture was only a trap in order to prove him, said to the King all that was proper to turn him from such a design. He prayed the King, if he really thought a time of repose was necessary to his health, to confer upon him the temporary exercise of authority, reserving the right to retake the crown when he thought proper. He ended by throwing himself at his father's feet and conjuring him to change his resolution."

183. *Macchiavels:* Macchiavelli, a celebrated Florentine statesman. Among his writings is one, *Il Principe*, a treatise in which are expounded the obnoxious principles and system of policy ever since known as Macchiavellism.

221. *The Act of Abdication out:* Beauregard, describing the abdication, says: The third of September, 1730, he called to the Château at Rivoli the Knights of the Annunziata, the ministers, the presidents, indeed all the great personages. Only the Prince of Piedmont and Del Borgo were informed of the purpose of this great convocation. The assembly being formed, the King imposed silence, and the Marquis Del Borgo read in a loud voice the act by which his Majesty renounced the throne and gave the sovereign power to Charles Emmanuel, his only son, ordering all his subjects to obey him as their legitimate sovereign. The speech was conceived in the same terms as the abdication of Charles Fifth. Victor announced the same motives, — his advanced age, indisposition, his desire to put an interval between the cares of the throne and death. Finally he enlarged upon the capacity of the prince, his son.

254. *Chambéry:* a city of France in the department of Savoy, 110 miles west-north-west of Turin.

258. *Victor, Captain against Catinat*, etc.: the French under Catinat fought with Victor the famous battle of Staffarde, August 15, 1690, when a number of places fell into the hands of the French, and the Duke of Savoy had the misfortune to see his country ravaged by them. At the battle of Turin the French sustained a severe defeat at the hands of Victor.

261. *Savoy:* at this time a duchy of the Kingdom of Sardinia, now annexed to France and forming the departments of Savoie and Haute-Savoie. — *Piedmont:* the most important part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, now an Italian principality in the northwest of Italy. — *Montferrat:* a territory of Northern Italy, the whole of which was annexed to the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1708. — *Sardinia:* this island of the Mediterranean was ceded to the Duke of Savoy in 1720 in place of Sicily, and became part of the Kingdom of Sardinia with Victor Amadeus II. as King.

311. *Louis of the South:* in opposition to Louis XIV., King of France, one of Victor's rivals.

502. *The Marchioness Sebastian takes the name of Spigno:* Victor married the widow of the Count of St. Sebastian the second of August. She was a daughter of Count Cumiana, and had been lady of honor to the King's mother. After her husband's death, Victor made her lady of honor to the Princess of Piedmont. She lived in the palace, and gained great ascendency over him. Victor only declared his marriage after his abdication. He gave to her the marquisate of Spigno, and reserved for himself only a revenue of 50,000 écus, and departed immediately for Savoy, where he had chosen the place of his retreat.

Second Year: King Charles. Part I. 241. *Moncagliere:* a town four miles south of Turin.

335. *Susa:* a town of Northern Italy, thirty miles from Turin. — *Superga:* a hill near Turin.

349. *Fostered laws and letters*, etc.: Victor prepared a voluminous code of laws in four volumes, which included civil laws, criminal laws, and laws for public instruction. It was called the Victorian Code. He also made great efforts to reawaken the love for solid studies, and protected science and the arts. Among other things, he founded a college at Turin, and called professors from France, Flanders, and the principal cities of Italy.

King Charles. Part II. 37. *Fleury:* a Cardinal at this

time. Beauregard says that instead of helping Victor, as it had been supposed he did, he was personally unfriendly to him.

50. *All my people love me:* King Charles conducted the affairs of his kingdom so well that he was much beloved.

62. *Why should the King of France invade my realm?* Voltaire says there is no truth in the story that the King of France aided Victor.

71. *Rhebinder:* he was marshal of the army.

74. *The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver*, etc.: this is just as given by Beauregard.

138. *Arrest him now — drag here your father:* Charles signed the order for his father's arrest, according to Beauregard, with tears in his eyes and a hand trembling so that D'Ormea was obliged to help him. The Marquis D'Ormea carried out the order, and lost not an instant in putting it into execution. He invested with his force the château of Moncagliere in the night, and dragged Victor from his bed The old King raged against the indignity, but was finally silenced and carried under guard to Rivoli.

148. *Alberoni . . . Coscia:* Cardinals whom D'Ormea got the better of in Victor's squabbles with the Church.

294. *Take it, my father:* the turn which Browning gives the drama is not without some historic foundation, for it was said that Charles wished to return the crown to his father, but that he was prevented from it by his council. Beauregard does not think this probable.

313. *D'Orleans in his lines:* the Duke of Orleans was badly wounded in the battle of Turin, won by Victor.

314. *Eugene's comrade:* governor-general of Milan. He fought with Victor in the battle of Turin.

337. *He reigned at first through setting up yourself as pattern:* Charles is said to have been always under the ascendency of his father, and for a long time after he became King thought it his duty to render an account day by day to his father of the important things he had done.